

**NEW ZEALAND PRINTS
1900-1950:
AN UNSEEN HERITAGE**

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ABSTRACT

The vibrant school of printmaking which emerged and flourished in New Zealand between 1900 and 1950 forms the subject of this thesis. It examines the attitudes of the printmakers, many of whom regarded the print as the most democratic of art forms and one that should reflect the realities of everyday life. Their subject matter, contemporary city scenes, people at work and leisure, local landscapes, Māori and indigenous flora and fauna, is analysed and revealed as anticipating by over a decade that of regionalist painters. They are also identified as the first New Zealand artists to draw attention to social and environmental issues. Trained under the British South Kensington art education system, New Zealand printmakers placed great importance on craftsmanship. Although some worked in a realist style others experimented with abstraction and surrealism, placing them among the forefront of New Zealand artists receptive to modern art. Expatriate New Zealand printmakers played significant roles in three major printmaking movements abroad, the Artists' International Alliance, Atelier 17 and the Claude Flight Linocut Movement.

The thesis redresses the failure of existing histories of New Zealand art to recognise the existence of a major twentieth-century art movement. It identifies the main factors contributing to the low status of printmaking in New Zealand. Commercial artists rather than those with a fine arts background led the Quoin Club, which initiated a New Zealand school of printmaking in 1916; Gordon Tovey's overthrow of the South Kensington system in 1945 devalued the craftsmanship so important to printmakers; and the rise of modernism, which gave priority to formal values and abstraction, further exacerbated institutional indifference to the print. The adoption of Māori imagery by printmakers resulted in recent art historians retrospectively accusing them of cultural appropriation. Even the few printmakers who attained some recognition were criticised for their involvement in textile and bookplate design and book-illustration.

Key artists discussed in the thesis include James Boswell, Stephen Champ, Frederick Coventry, Rona Dyer, Arnold Goodwin, Thomas Gulliver, Trevor Lloyd, Stewart MacLennan, Gilbert Meadows, John L. Moore, E. Mervyn Taylor, Arthur

Thompson, Herbert Tornquist, Frank Weitzel, Hilda Wiseman, George Woods, John Buckland Wright and Adele Younghusband.

Details of the approximately 3,000 prints created during this period are recorded in a database, and summarised in the Printmakers' Survey included in Volume Two. In addition reproductions of 156 prints are illustrated and documented; while a further 43 prints are reproduced within the text of Volume One.

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DEDICATION

To Lawrence Roberts with much gratitude for your constant encouragement.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.I.A.	Artists' International Alliance
ASA	Auckland Society of Arts
CSA	Canterbury Society of Arts
DNZB	Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
NZAFA	New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts
NRAM	National Register of Archives, New Zealand
NZSOA	New Zealand Society of Artists
OAS	Otago Art Society
W.E.A.	Workers' Educational Association

NOTE ABOUT IMAGES

All the figures are located within the text of Volume One and plates in Volume Two. Titles of prints have not been shortened but have been given in the format used by the artists, including their abbreviations.

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The right to use the images contained in this thesis is claimed under the Copyright Act, 1994, Sections 40-49, pertaining to use of images for education and research, and preparation of works for examination.

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INTRODUCTION

At the launch of the Print Council of New Zealand's 1969 exhibition, Gordon Brown, Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the Auckland City Art Gallery, attributed the recent renaissance of the print to the adoption of printmaking by painters such as Ralph Hotere and Patrick Hanly.¹ Dismissive of the efforts of previous printmakers, Brown claimed that while a considerable amount of printmaking had occurred during the early twentieth-century, "A good deal of the work produced... was amateurish but odd printmakers occasionally produced a print of merit".² It was a view shared by Peter Tomory, former Director of the Auckland City Art Gallery and now lecturer in art history at the University of Auckland, who declared "the graphic arts are the most neglected media in the country. In fact, there has never been a time when these media have been prominent: consequently, indigenous printmakers of any quality are very rare".³ To judge by subsequent accounts of twentieth-century New Zealand art it seems that these statements have been accepted uncritically. One of the principal intentions of this thesis is to demonstrate that Brown's and Tomory's views were unfounded by showing that a vibrant school of New Zealand printmaking emerged and flourished between 1900 and 1950. It also investigates what caused modern historians and curators to marginalise printmakers of this era,⁴ and the reasons why early twentieth-century New Zealand prints continue to remain a virtually unknown part of our artistic heritage.

Early twentieth-century printmakers began creating prints depicting

¹ Gordon Brown, "Introduction", *The Print Council of New Zealand Exhibition 2*, Auckland: The Print Council of New Zealand, 1969, p. 4.

² Ibid., p. 3.

³ P.A. Tomory, "Art" in A. L. Mcleod (ed.), *The Pattern of New Zealand Culture*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press & Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, p. 197.

⁴ Ironically, both Brown and Tomory were print connoisseurs in their own right. Tomory consolidated the print collection at the Auckland City Art Gallery during his tenure as Director, and later made a substantial donation of prints from his private collection to the gallery. Courtney Johnson, "A Connoisseur's Eye: Prints from the Tomory Collection", *NZArt Monthly*, March 2005, www.nzartmonthly.co.nz/courtneyjohnson. Brown played a pivotal role in establishing the Print Council of New Zealand, and donated works from his print collection to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Neil Roberts, "The Print Collection", *Bulletin of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu*, (No b.130), Spring, 2002, p. 5.

contemporary New Zealand streets, factories, landscapes, Māori, and indigenous flora and fauna, at least a decade before painters adopted regionalist subject matter, and were among the first artists to show concern about political and environmental issues. The majority worked in a realist style, but several were experimenting with abstraction and surrealism significantly earlier than their painterly colleagues. New Zealanders also played significant roles in three major printmaking movements of the twentieth-century: John Buckland Wright was deputy director of Atelier 17, a Parisian printmaking workshop which pioneered Surrealist etching and engraving;⁵ James Boswell, a founder of the Artists International Association, has long been recognised as one of Britain's leading twentieth-century satirists;⁶ and Frank Weitzel was a highly regarded member of the Colour Linocut Movement.⁷ Given their contribution to New Zealand, European and British art, one would expect that early twentieth-century printmakers would occupy a significant place in our art history, yet it is rare for them to receive more than passing comment. In the absence of a national print collection, their prints are scattered across public and private collections, and they are rarely exhibited, let alone critically considered as a body of work.

The root cause of their marginalisation can be attributed to generations of New Zealand art historians and curators focussing their attention on painting to the detriment of artists working in other media. Despite being centuries removed from Renaissance Europe, they strongly subscribed to sixteenth-century Italian historian Giorgio Vasari's concept of the hierarchy of media. In his *Lives of the Artists* (1568), Vasari ranked oil painting at the top of the hierarchy followed by sculpture, with printmaking rated as the lowliest of the arts.⁸ Two factors contributed to Vasari's poor opinion of the print: printmakers created their work in multiples meaning their art never enjoyed the exclusivity associated with painting and sculpture; and few printmaking media had

⁵ S.W. Hayter, *About Prints*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 118.

⁶ Richard Cork, "Look Back in Anger", *Sunday Times Magazine*, 21 November 1976, p. 83.

⁷ Stephen Coppel, *Claude Flight and His Followers: The Colour Linocut Movement Between the Wars*, Parkes A.C.T: Australian National Gallery, 1992, p. 17.

⁸ Elizabeth Wyckoff, "Matrix, Mark, Syntax. A Historical View of Printmaking in Relation to Its Techniques", in David Platzker and Elizabeth Wyckoff, *Hard Pressed, 600 Years of Prints and Process*, New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2000, pp. 14-15.

originated in the fine arts.⁹ Most printmaking techniques had begun life as trade processes and were not regarded as fine art media until being adopted by artists for creative purposes.¹⁰ An outstanding example of this phenomenon occurred in Europe during the 1880s, creating conditions which would eventually lead to the emergence of creative printmaking in this country.

The introduction of photomechanical means of reproducing images made processes such as wood-engraving for illustrative purposes all but obsolete.¹¹ As wood-engraving, etching and lithography were freed from their reproductive role; artists began exploring their creative potential, resulting in an unprecedented expansion of fine art printmaking.¹² “The surge in popularity of prints during the last decade of the nineteenth century established conditions that... encouraged almost every major twentieth-century artist to create prints”.¹³ In Britain this led to a proliferation of print societies as artists formed groups to champion particular print media. William Morris, leader of the Arts and Crafts Movement, promoted wood-engravings and woodcuts created using traditional methods.¹⁴ Seymour Hayden began an etching revival by forming the Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers in 1880 while James Whistler and Joseph Pennell encouraged interest in lithography by establishing the Senefelder Club in 1908.¹⁵ In 1920 Frank Morley Fletcher formed the Colour Woodcut Society to promote the Japanese woodcut method of printmaking¹⁶ and Paul Nash set up the rival Society of

⁹ For example, woodblocks were originally used to create printed textiles and playing cards while intaglio processes were the domain of goldsmiths. Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ James Hamilton, *Wood Engraving & The Woodcut In Britain c.1890-1990*, London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1994, p. 39.

¹² Pat Gilmour, *Artists in Print*, London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1981, p. 7.

¹³ Riva Castleman, *Prints of the 20th Century*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1988, p. 11.

¹⁴ James Hamilton, pp. 38-40.

¹⁵ Clinton Adams, “The Nature of Lithography”, in Pat Gilmour (ed.), *Lasting Impressions, Lithography As Art*, London: Alexandria Press, 1988, p. 26.

¹⁶ James Hamilton, p. 70.

Wood-Engravers to encourage a more modern approach to printmaking.¹⁷ Claude Flight, arguably one of the most influential British printmakers of the twentieth-century, initiated the avant-garde Colour Linocut Movement.¹⁸

Close cultural ties existed between Britain and her southernmost colony, New Zealand,¹⁹ and initially there were distinct parallels in the emergence of creative printmaking in both countries. However, a major difference was that while artists in the fine arts led the British printmaking revival, creative printmaking in this country was championed by commercial artists, a factor that led to early twentieth-century New Zealand printmakers adopting a far more pragmatic approach to printmaking than their British colleagues. For example, although New Zealand printmakers held the Arts and Crafts Movement and traditional forms of printmaking in high regard, they were equally at ease experimenting with the latest techniques in commercial printing technology. Unlike Britain, no print societies sprang up in New Zealand to promote a specific kind of printmaking media. Instead printmakers tended to work across a range of print media. Their pragmatic approach was a direct result of their commercial art experience; already familiar with commercial printing processes through their everyday work, they did not face the restrictions placed on British artists by trade printers anxious to protect their jobs and unwilling to share their skills. For example, Joseph Pennell had to employ a trade lithographer to print lithographs created by artists belonging to the Senefelder Club, as printers refused to teach them the process.²⁰ Such barriers were uncommon in New Zealand, where printmakers usually had a working knowledge of several printing processes. As a result, early emulation and admiration of British printmakers in this country soon gave way to divergence, as printmakers adopted an eclectic range of styles and media, so that by 1919 a school of printmaking was emerging.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁸ Gordon Samuel & Nicola Penny, *The Cutting Edge of Modernity, Linocuts of the Grosvenor School*, Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2002, p. 20.

¹⁹ David McIntyre, "Imperialism and Nationalism", in Geoffrey Rice (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edition, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 343.

²⁰ Pat Gilmour, p. 308.

Unfortunately for New Zealand printmaking, the very source of its vigour, the commercial art backgrounds of many printmakers, was a bone of contention to members of the art establishment such as Charles Baevvertiz, editor of *The Triad: A Monthly Magazine of Music, Science & Art*, and Archie Fisher, Director of the Elam School of Art.²¹ They appeared unaware that printmakers working as commercial artists were often as professionally qualified as those directing the country's art schools. For example, Frederick Ellis who worked for the New Zealand Railways Advertising Studio²² had like Archie Fisher himself, graduated from the Royal Academy of Art.²³ Similarly, John Mills Thomasson,²⁴ a commercial artist at *The Sun* newspaper in Christchurch was, like Richard Wallwork, Director of the Canterbury College School of Art, a graduate of the Manchester Municipal School of Art.²⁵ Arnold Goodwin, Director of the Carlton Studio Advertising Agency,²⁶ and Harry Linley Richardson, Head of the Art Department of Wellington Technical College, had both graduated from the Académie Julian.²⁷ New Zealand advertising agencies had been quick to recognise the advantages of employing professionally trained artists to create their advertising material; the precedent being set by the Ilott Advertising Studio, which in 1910 published a brochure entitled *Art & Business* to promote this aspect of its operations.²⁸ Members of the art establishment, however, considered employment in the commercial art sector deplorable. Archie Fisher, for example, "took a dim view of those interested in commercial work even though the best students did get employment in those areas.

²¹ John Daly-Peoples, *Elam, 1890-1990*, Auckland: Elam School of Fine Arts, 1990, np.

²² *Catalogue of the First Retrospective Exhibition of the Works of F.V. Ellis, A.R.C.A.*, Petone: Petone Settlers' Museum, October 1980, np. Artist's File, Christchurch Art Gallery Library.

²³ Gordon Brown & Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1939-1980*, Auckland: Collins, 1982, p. 102.

²⁴ Correspondence with Jean Thomasson, the printmaker's niece, 19 May 2005.

²⁵ Neil Roberts, *Richard and Elizabeth Wallwork*, Canterbury Vignettes Series, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 2000, p. 4.

²⁶ Kate McGahey, *The Concise Dictionary of New Zealand Artists: Painters, Printmakers, Sculptors*, Wellington: Gilt Edge, 2000, p. 97.

²⁷ H. Linley Richardson, "Reminiscences", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XI, No 1, 1939, p. 8.

²⁸ Ilott Advertising Agency, *Art & Business*, Ilott Advertising: Wellington: 1910.

He believed that if someone was committed to their art that they would rather starve in a garret than compromise themselves”²⁹

The populism of early twentieth-century printmakers was another source of irritation to members of the art establishment. Many printmakers regarded distinctions between the fine arts and applied arts as artificial and were committed to integrating art with everyday life.³⁰ It was an approach disliked by those in the art establishment, who “upheld the sanctity of the Fine Arts; painting was blessed by the Muses and was not to be soiled by subject matter dealing with poverty and protest”.³¹ Marginalised for much of their own time, the representational and sometimes didactic prints they created held little appeal for later generations of art historians and critics, such as Peter Tomory, Gordon Brown and Francis Pound, schooled in Clive Bell's theory of Significant Form and Roger Fry's formalism. Bell argued that descriptive, illustrative or narrative works could not be regarded as works of art as “They leave untouched our aesthetic emotions because it is not their forms but the ideas or information suggested or conveyed by their forms that affect us.”³² Populism alone, however, does not account for their marginalisation, as even those who created avant-garde prints that could be appreciated purely for their formal qualities, found themselves shunned.

Also contributing to the marginalisation of early twentieth-century printmakers was their deep-seated belief in the importance of craftsmanship. It was a belief that stemmed from their South Kensington system art training, an Arts and Crafts based curriculum that had been the cornerstone of art education in New Zealand since the foundation of the country's first art schools, beginning with the Canterbury College School of Art in 1882. From the 1930s onwards Gordon Tovey and several other art educators began questioning the appropriateness of using a system designed to provide nineteenth-century British adults with vocational training for teaching twentieth-century

²⁹ John Daly-Peoples, *ibid.*, np.

³⁰ Francis Shurrock, “Art Must be An Expression of Life”, *N. Z. Radio Record*, 15 June 1934, p. 18.

³¹ Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting*, Auckland: David Bateman, 1990, p. 120.

³² Clive Bell, *Art*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1914, p. 17.

New Zealand children.³³ Tovey strongly believed that art based on technical excellence was devoid of conceptual creativity and stifled spontaneity;³⁴ a view subsequently adopted by many art historians, curators and critics. As a result, craftsmanship came to be viewed as a weakness rather than a strength.³⁵

In addition to these reasons, printmakers found themselves marginalised because of their involvement in designing bookplates, illustrations and textiles, activities which helped reinforce the perception that printmaking was an applied art rather a fine art. Many of them also had the misfortune to belong to the interwar generation of artists later accused by Modern and Post-Modern art historians of displaying “unthinking genuflection” towards British art,³⁶ but when they turned their attention to Māori subject matter they were retrospectively accused of cultural appropriation.³⁷

Rather than judging New Zealand’s early twentieth-century printmakers by standards that were not their own, I have attempted to examine their work within the context of their own time, and from a critical perspective that they would have shared. When this view point is adopted it becomes apparent that far from being a minor part of twentieth-century New Zealand art, between 1900 and 1950 printmakers produced a significant body of work which not only deserves to be taken seriously but adds a further dimension to our understanding of New Zealand art.

Chapter One describes how from inauspicious beginnings, printmakers associated with the Quoin Club succeeded in establishing a school of printmaking by

³³ David Bell, “Art in Education, An Essay Celebrating One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Art Education at the Dunedin College of Education”, *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, Special Series No 5, 2000, p. 25.

³⁴ Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour, Gordon Tovey Artist Educator*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1998, p. 93.

³⁵ Richard Sharwell, “Craftsmen - or complete human beings?”, *Education*, Vol 2, No 3, July 1949, p. 42.

³⁶ Nicola Green, “Adele Younghusband. A Transitional Modernist”, *Art New Zealand*, No 91, Winter 1999, p. 77.

³⁷ Francis Pound, *The Space Between: Pakeha Use of Maori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*, Auckland: Workshop Press, 1994, p. 131.

1919. Chapter Two demonstrates that during the 1920s, La Trobe teachers recruited from Britain assumed responsibility for promoting printmaking, but led it in quite a different direction from their Quoin Club predecessors by rejecting industrial and city imagery in favour of the unspoiled landscape. The emergence of the print as the most democratic of artforms during the 1930s, when artists began using the print as a medium for making their left-wing views more widely known, is the subject of Chapter Three. It also argues that while many prints of the period were executed in a social realist style, the radicalisation of printmakers created greater aesthetic as well as political freedom, resulting in unprecedented experimentation. For the first time, expatriate printmakers began having a significant impact on their adopted countries, with James Boswell, John Buckland Wright and Frank Weitzel gaining critical attention during this decade. The final chapter shows how cultural nationalism, encouraged by the Centennial Celebrations of 1939-1940 and intensified by New Zealand's entry into World War Two, brought an end to experimentation and resulted in printmakers creating symbolic Neo-Romantic wood-engravings of indigenous subject matter. It also analyses how Gordon Tovey's reforms of the art curriculum led to the demise of the South Kensington system of art training,³⁸ and the rapid decline of printmaking as a fine art. The conclusion examines curatorial attitudes that have contributed to the ongoing exclusion of printmaking from the art historical record.

EXISTING LITERATURE

British, Australian and American printmaking histories, such as James Hamilton's, *Wood Engraving & The Woodcut in Britain c.1890-1990* (1994), Roger Butler's & Chris Duetscher's, *A Survey of Australian Relief Prints 1900-1950* (1978), and Judith Goldman's, *American Prints: Process & Proofs* (1981), provided initial inspiration for this research. However, no comparable history of New Zealand printmaking exists. Instead, the major texts of New Zealand art history are almost exclusively devoted to painting, and perhaps understandably, pay little attention to printmaking. These include: Peter Tomory, *Painting 1827-1967* (1968), Gordon Brown

³⁸ New Zealand Education Department, *An Art Scheme for Primary Schools*, Wellington: School Publications Branch, 1945, p. 1.

& Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1980* (1982), Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (1990) and Michael Dunn, *New Zealand Painting, A Concise History* (2003). Brief mention of printmaking was made in Gordon Brown's series *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Tradition and Departures* (1972), *New Zealand Painting 1920-1940: Adaptation and Nationalism* (1975), *New Zealand Painting 1940-60: Conformity and Dissension* (1981) and Roger Blackley's *Two Centuries of New Zealand Landscape Art* (1990). Anne Kirker's diploma of fine arts thesis, "A history of printmaking in New Zealand" (1969), provided a very short overview of printmaking from 1840 to 1969, while her essay, "A History of Lithography in New Zealand" (1988), gave an account of the growth of creative lithography. The coverage provided by these sources was at best fragmentary, and provided an incomplete account of the country's printmaking history.

Were it not for Thomas Gulliver, a printmaker appointed as the country's first honorary curator of prints at the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1927, we would have no published account of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking. In fact, my discovery of Gulliver's essay provided a key stimulus for undertaking this thesis. Gulliver organised the country's first national exhibition of works by early twentieth-century printmakers, the *Loan Collection of Prints Representative of Graphic Art In New Zealand*, held at the Auckland City Art Gallery in August 1930. The short essay he wrote for the exhibition catalogue, "An Historical Note 1888-1920", provided initial evidence that a school of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking had existed and the inclusion of 117 prints by 41 artists in the catalogue demonstrated that far more printmaking activity had occurred during this era than described in the published histories of New Zealand art. Anne Kirker's article, "An early champion of black and white", (1974) provided an introduction to Gulliver's career. Alexa Johnston's thesis, "T.V. Gulliver, A Catalogue of His Graphic Art" (1979), was a pivotal work, which demonstrated the extensive influence Gulliver had on New Zealand printmaking both as an artist and print curator, and his role in establishing the Quoin Club, the first graphic arts club in Australasia.³⁹

³⁹ David Angeloro, *Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Painter-Etchers 1800-1940*, Australian Visual Arts Database, Documentation Pty Ltd, Discovery Media and David Angeloro, 1995, CD-Rom.

The difficulties printmakers of Gulliver's generation faced in obtaining training were highlighted in Dorothee Pauli's thesis "Mina Arndt (1885-1926)" (2000). This provided a picture of a printmaker who, when faced with a dearth of printmaking training in this country travelled overseas to study traditional European etching. Upon her return she found herself shunned by a public now more interested in acquiring New Zealand regionalist prints than Old Master-style etchings. Jane Vial's, *Harry Linley Richardson* (1986) and Neil Roberts's, *Richard & Elizabeth Wallwork* (2000), described the contribution that migrant British art teachers made to New Zealand printmaking during the opening decades of the twentieth-century. Anna Petersen's, *R.N. Field: The Dunedin Years* (1987), Mark Stocker's, *Francis Shurrock, Shaping New Zealand Sculpture* (2000) and Roxanne Fea's, "The Woodcut Prints of Leo Bestall" (1996), detailed the impact that teachers recruited from Britain under the La Trobe Scheme during the 1920s had on printmaking, including their promotion of regionalism, introduction of Post-Impressionism, and championing of the linocut and the woodcut.

Tony Mackle's series of articles on key printmakers of the 1930s and 1940s "E. Mervyn Taylor (1906-1964)", (1988); "George Woods (1896-1963)", (1995); and "Stewart Bell Maclellan 1903-1973: 'The Man for the Job'", (2005) placed these printmakers in context with their predecessors, and emphasised their contributions to the development of Neo-Romantic printmaking. Linda Tyler's essay, "Rona Dyer Muralist and Wood Engraver" (1999) and Peter Simpson's, *Engravings on Wood by Leo Bensemann* (2004), also provided comprehensive accounts of two of the most significant printmakers of the 1940s. David Bell's, *Alexander Hare McLintock: Printmaker* (1994), revealed the conservatism of the printmaker who directed the country's first national exhibition of art, the *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, 1940.⁴⁰ Bell's work helped explain the art establishments' rejection of modern contemporary New Zealand printmaking and its taste for conservative British and European etchings. Also important in understanding the decline of the print as a fine artform during the 1940s was David Bell's, "Art in Education, An Essay Celebrating One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Art Education at the Dunedin

⁴⁰ Roger Blackley, "Centennial Exhibitions of Art", in William Renwick (ed.), *Creating A National Spirit, Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004, p. 225.

College of Education” (2000). This described the profound changes made to art training by Gordon Tovey, and although it did not specifically address printmaking, it provided an insight as to why it was consigned to the margins of the art curriculum.

The careers of expatriate New Zealand printmakers had received little attention. Herbert Roth’s, “James Boswell A New Zealand Artist in London” (1977), brought to light the work of a printmaker regarded as a leading figure in twentieth-century British satire, but one who remains largely unknown here.⁴¹ Similarly, although John Buckland Wright’s sensuous engravings of the female form were already well documented, Christopher Buckland Wright’s, *Surreal Times, The Abstract Engravings and Wartime Letters of John Buckland Wright* (2000), highlighted his father’s contribution to Surrealist printmaking. However, the careers of Frederick Coventry, Frank Weitzel and E. Heber Thompson, whose prints also gained critical attention in Britain, remained unaccounted for. New Zealand printmakers at home and abroad also involved themselves in designing bookplates, illustrating books and hand-printed textiles, but little was known about these printmaking activities until the appearance of Siân Davis’s, “Hilda Wiseman’s Bookplates” (1998), Ian Thwaites’s, *In Another Dimension: Auckland Bookplates 1920-1960* (2002) and Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins’s, *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design* (2004). This remains a fertile area for further research.

The review of the existing literature revealed that interest in early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking increased after the advent post-modernism, when art historians began questioning the restrictive nature of modernist theory by placing greater importance on examining the context in which works were created, and disregarding artificial boundaries between the fine and applied arts. This resulted in the publication of monographs about individual printmakers and surveys about those active in particular regions, with momentum steadily increasing since the 1990s. However, while these publications brought printmakers greater recognition, they also created the impression that they were isolated practitioners, rather than members of national school of printmaking. This thesis is related to the renewed interest being shown in early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking, but unlike earlier histories, it is neither

⁴¹ Herbert Roth, “James Boswell A New Zealand Artist in London”, *Auckland City Art Gallery Quarterly*, No 65, December 1977, p. 1.

biographical nor provincial in scope. It provides a more comprehensive history of New Zealand printmaking than existing surveys, and a contextual framework for monographs on individual printmakers. It identifies the artists, curators, dealers, critics, teachers and publishers who acted as catalysts for creative printmaking, and how access to training and exhibition opportunities influenced printmaking activity. It also expands on the achievements of expatriate printmakers, whose significance has been grossly underrated.

METHODOLOGY

An empirical approach has been applied to the research, placing emphasis on identifying the social context in which printmakers lived, in an effort to understand the cultural currency of their prints. An examination of how British, American and Australian historians had interpreted the printmaking histories of their countries revealed a focus on printmakers working in particular media, styles, subject matter or geographic regions. This resulted in works such as Stephen Coppel's, *Linocuts of the Machine Age* (1995), Joanna Selborne's, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration 1904-1940* (2001), Susan Sheehan's, *American Modernist Prints: 1900-1945* (1987) and Roger Butler's, *Melbourne Woodcuts and Linocuts of the 1920s and 1930s* (1981). In order to ascertain if the history of printmaking in this country could be analysed along similar lines, it was decided to begin by locating as many early twentieth-century New Zealand prints as possible, and to categorise them by subject matter, art movement and style, print media and regional origin. The start and end points of 1900 and 1950 were chosen because creative printmaking began to emerge here in the 1900s, and after reaching its zenith as a fine artform during the 1930s, by 1950 was once again considered a craft rather than an art. These dates also define what may also be considered the 'pre-history' of the much more well-known print revival of the latter part of the twentieth-century.

Estimates and recollections of how much printmaking activity had occurred in early twentieth-century New Zealand varied widely among those consulted. Rather than relying on such subjective information, it was decided to verify how many prints had actually been exhibited between 1900 and 1950, and how many were subsequently acquired for public gallery collections. Regional art society, dealer gallery and art

auction house catalogues of the era were examined and all 28 publicly-funded art galleries in the country approached and asked for details of their print holdings. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was also asked to provide information about its substantial print collection. Overseas galleries were contacted to obtain information about prints created by expatriate printmakers. Although priority was given to locating works in public collections, several private print collectors and print dealers who had heard about the survey also volunteered information about their collections. Newspapers, magazines, books and journals of the period were also examined to obtain copies of prints that had been published. Based on the relatively small number of prints known to have been created during this era, it was estimated that at most, several hundred prints would be traced. In the event, approximately 3,000 prints were identified. This figure errs on the side of caution, many exhibition catalogues of the period did not differentiate between watercolours, drawings and prints, and only those works specifically identified as prints were included.

With so many prints being located it became necessary to build a database to manage the information, and this was modelled on the National Gallery of Australia's Print Collection database. Having ascertained where prints were located, visits were made to examine as many as possible, in order to build up an appreciation of their subject matter, styles and print media. It was expected that an analysis of the database and examination of the prints would reveal they could be categorised like British, American and Australian prints, but the opposite proved to be the case. Early twentieth-century New Zealand printmakers usually worked across a range of print media, making a media-based approach to the research inappropriate. Most worked in a realist style rather than being ideologically committed to a particular art movement, and clearly an analysis by style or movement was also impossible. A geographical approach was discounted after finding that regional differences quickly disappeared once artists gained access to a common art curriculum.

Examination of the prints as a whole revealed the major preoccupation of printmakers to be the creation of an art of national identity, based on city and industrial scenes, landscapes, images of Māori and flora and fauna. What differentiated printmakers from one another was which of these subjects they focussed on and the style in which they executed their prints. For example, John Lysaght Moore

concentrated almost exclusively on indigenous flora and fauna while the Quoin Club printmakers showed more interest in city and working life. Categorising the prints in this manner provided a useful framework for analysing the prints, however, it should be noted that the categories were far from rigid, and several printmakers adopted different types of subject matter and styles concurrently.

The analysis also indicated that significant changes in approach to subject matter had occurred on a regular basis, accompanied by the adoption of new print media and styles. Edwardian-style etchings of industrial and city subjects, and images of Māori presented as emblems of a dying race, prevalent in the opening decades of the century, gave way to Art Deco linocuts and woodcuts of the unspoiled landscape during the 1920s. These were replaced by social realist woodcuts and lithographs of working life and abstract linocuts during the Depression of the 1930s. Social realism and experimentation came to an end in the 1940s, with the advent of Neo-Romantic wood-engravings of indigenous flora and fauna and landscapes, and iconic images of powerful Māori archetypes. It therefore seemed appropriate to analyse the prints chronologically and thematically, starting with the period 1900-1919 when creative printmaking first emerged, and on a decade by decade basis from 1920 until 1950, examining the reasons for the variations in subject matter, print media and style that had occurred.

Not all of the approximately 3,000 prints recorded in the database have been located and physically examined. Approximately, 1,000 have been viewed in public and private collections, or in published material, and from these 199 prints selected to demonstrate the key themes, print media and styles typical of each of the above periods. These images have formed the basis of the discussion in the thesis, and 156 are reproduced as catalogued plates in Volume Two. The remaining 43 prints illustrate the text of Volume One. The location of a print in Volume One or Volume Two does not imply a difference in status. In cases where comparisons were being made between prints, it seemed appropriate to place them in close proximity to one another within the text of Volume One. It has also been difficult to trace the current whereabouts of several prints, making it impossible to provide catalogue details of them in Volume Two. However, they are still considered important enough to be included, and copies of them were obtained by using images scanned from previously published material.

The database was a useful tool, but was supplemented by an extensive literature search to ascertain what had already been uncovered about these printmakers, and a timeline constructed to identify the social, political, economic and cultural events that had influenced their art. Every effort was made to trace and interview the few surviving printmakers of the period to identify the issues that had preoccupied them, the styles and print media they had adopted, and how their work had been critically received. A systematic search of archives was undertaken in regional centres throughout New Zealand to locate primary material about early twentieth-century New Zealand printmakers. This involved searching artists' papers, art society records, art school and technical school archives, gallery archives, museum and library archives, dealer gallery records and newspaper archives. Once it was realised that commercial artists had played a leading role in establishing a school of New Zealand printmaking, the archives of the advertising agencies that had employed them were examined. The archives of the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the British Museum, Tate Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum also yielded useful information about expatriate printmakers. The colleagues, dealers and descendants of deceased printmakers were also an invaluable source of information, as were print collectors, curators, art librarians and others with specialist knowledge of printmaking.

The majority of printmakers included in the research were New Zealand-born artists active during the period 1900 to 1950, who demonstrated a commitment to printmaking in this country or overseas. Nationality in such a migratory nation was sometimes difficult to clarify, and rather than trying to define who was, or was not a New Zealander, it was decided to include artists who described themselves as New Zealanders, no matter what age they were when they left the country, or how long they remained overseas. Also included were migrant printmakers, and visiting printmakers who had some influence on printmaking during their stay in New Zealand.

In terms of print media, the research included etchings, engravings, woodcuts, wood-engravings, lithographs, monoprints, linocuts, screen-prints and scraper-board prints. No distinction was made between stand-alone prints created for exhibition or those commissioned as illustrations, bookplates and textile designs. The inclusion of these categories reflects the range of fields printmakers worked in, as they rarely confined themselves to creating prints for exhibition alone. Brief mention was also

made of prints created by artists who were primarily painters rather than printmakers. The objective of this was to demonstrate how artists' prints can provide valuable insights into their art practice. They may have explored a concept in print format before expanding it further in a painting, or used print media to develop concepts first raised in their paintings.⁴² However, discussion of this topic has been deliberately limited as a comprehensive comparison of artists' paintings and prints would be an area of study so extensive that it would warrant a PhD in its own right.

The Senior Print Curator of the National Gallery of Australia has invited the author to become a Contributing Partner, by making information from the print database available to users via the National Gallery's website. It is planned to implement this process as soon as possible, in the interim the Print Survey included in Volume Two provides details of the 3,000 prints recorded during the course of this research.

It is hoped that the availability of the thesis and the print database will act as a platform for further research on New Zealand printmaking. Now that the majority of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmakers have been identified, it will be possible for future researchers to ascertain who the major printmakers were and where their key works are located. It will also be possible for them to study prints created in a specific media or by printmakers located in a particular geographic region. It may also generate more interest in how artists' prints are related to their paintings.

⁴² For a more recent example of this see Anne Kirker, *Gretchen Albrecht, Crossing the Divide: a painter makes prints*, essay edited by James Ross, Wanganui: Sarjeant Gallery, 1999.

CHAPTER ONE

1900-1919

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CREATIVE PRINT

“New Zealand artists who are etchers are, I am afraid, so far, but few in number, and as a rule, our local exhibitions are quite destitute of any examples of their efforts”.¹

Creative printmaking was only sporadically practised by New Zealand artists during the first two decades of the twentieth-century. That any occurred at all was astounding considering there was virtually no institutional support for the print as a fine art medium. Creative printmaking was not included in the curricula of art schools or technical schools, art societies rarely included prints in their exhibitions, most art dealers were reluctant to represent contemporary New Zealand printmakers, public art galleries lacked print rooms and professional print curators were an unknown entity. Added to this, printmaking presses, tools, fine art paper and inks were not manufactured in New Zealand and had to be imported at great expense.² Despite these adverse conditions, by 1919 a group of Auckland artists had managed to establish a vibrant school of contemporary printmaking in their region, and printmakers in other centres were beginning to take greater interest in the medium. Marked differences, however, developed between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin printmaking.

Initially, little demand existed for contemporary New Zealand prints. A print collecting public certainly existed, but collectors wanted to buy works by eminent

¹ Charles Wilson, “A Gossip About Etching, Part II”, *The Triad, A Monthly Magazine of Music, Science and Art*, 10 October 1912, p. 29.

² The country's paper mills at Woodhaugh and Mataura produced low grade wrapping paper rather than fine art paper. K. A. Coleridge & John Ross, “Printing and Production”, Penny Griffith et al, *Book & Print Culture in New Zealand: A Guide to Print Culture in Aotearoa*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, pp. 53-66. Similarly, while the Christchurch firm of Morrison and Morrison had begun manufacturing printing inks in 1908, these were suitable for short-term commercial printing jobs rather than fine art prints. Shortages of printmaking materials were exacerbated by the imposition of a 20% tax on imported art supplies under the Tariff Act of 1907.

British etchers, such as Frank Brangwyn and Sir Frank Short, rather than prints by their compatriots. Advertisements in art catalogues and newspapers indicated that etchings by British printmakers were available from numerous art dealers including the Bartlett Art Gallery, John Leech and C. Rush in Auckland; J.C. Butler, the McGregor Wright and E. Murray Fuller Gallery in Wellington; Fishers Fine Art Gallery in Christchurch and Dunne's Picture Depot in Dunedin. The popularity of British prints was hardly surprising considering that in 1900 New Zealand was still a British colony of only sixty years standing.³ The most obvious reason why a school of New Zealand printmaking did not exist was that the country had yet to develop a sense of nationhood let alone an art of national identity.

Evidence of this was provided by New Zealand's rejection of an invitation to become a federated state in the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia in 1901; while viewed by some as a sign of nascent nationhood, in reality, the decision to remain outside the Australian Commonwealth was driven by a sense of superiority.⁴ New Zealanders were proud to be descended from "selected stock" rather than convicts, and viewed themselves as inhabitants of the "Britain of the South".⁵ Indeed, New Zealand chose to remain a cultural, political and economic outpost of Britain even after the colony was recognised as a Dominion by the British Parliament in 1907.⁶ The impact this attitude had on New Zealand culture was insidious, and in the arts manifested itself in attempts to emulate works by prominent British artists. For example, E. H. McCormick recalled that etchings by Frank Brangwyn and James Whistler were so popular that printmakers here began 'anglicising' their subject matter, so that "a damp alley off Manners Street could be made to resemble a corner of Dickens's London, while Island Bay might — with a little contrivance on the etcher's part — pass for

³ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 2003, p. 284.

⁴ Keith Sinclair, "Why New Zealanders Are Not Australians. New Zealand and the Australian Federal Movement, 1881-1901", K. Sinclair (ed.), *Tasman Relations*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1987, p. 101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁶ David McIntyre, "Imperialism and Nationalism", Geoffrey Rice (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edition, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 343.

Newlyn or St Ives”.⁷ This obviously discouraged the emergence of a New Zealand school of printmaking.

An even greater obstacle was the lack of fine art training available, for although art schools and technical schools had been offering classes in lithography, wood-engraving and etching since the 1890s, they were not designed for students of the fine arts.⁸ Lithography and wood-engraving were recommended subjects for those intending to become commercial printers or illustrators,⁹ and etching for trainee architects.¹⁰ Most art schools and art departments of technical colleges were funded under the *Manual & Technical Instruction Act*, introduced in 1900 to ensure that primary school-leavers received basic vocational training before beginning an apprenticeship.¹¹ This trade-orientated approach to printmaking was accentuated by the fact that the majority of art schools were affiliated with the South Kensington School of Art and Design in London, and had adopted its curriculum.¹² The Kensington School had been established in 1851 to provide British artisans with vocational training in an effort to improve the standard of industrial design;¹³ and its curriculum placed great emphasis on the acquisition of technical skills in geometry and copying ornamental forms.¹⁴ While questions were

⁷ E.H. McCormick, *The Inland Eye: A Sketch in Visual Autobiography*, Auckland: Auckland Gallery Associates, 1959, p. 22.

⁸ It was not until 1963 that Elam School of Art and Canterbury School of Art considered offering a Diploma in Fine Arts majoring in graphic media. This was introduced in 1967, and until then, printmaking survived on the margins of the syllabus as a craft option. “Minutes of the Joint Sub-Committee, Auckland and Canterbury Fine Arts Faculties, 19 February 1963” & “Report of a Meeting of Academic Staff, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, 16 February 1967”, Item 91/076, Elam Archive, Fine Arts Library, University of Auckland.

⁹ Wellington Technical College, *Syllabus 1911*, Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1911, pp. 43-57. Wellington High School Library.

¹⁰ Canterbury College School of Art, *Syllabus 1910*, Christchurch: The College, 1910, p. 18. School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹¹ J. Nicol, *The Technical Schools of New Zealand*, Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1940, p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 32-40.

¹³ Paula Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World*, Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1990, p. 171.

¹⁴ Quentin Bell, *The Schools of Design*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, pp. 256-257.

raised as early as 1909 about the appropriateness of transporting the South Kensington system to New Zealand,¹⁵ it prevailed here until 1945.

Once art students completed their apprenticeships, many were employed as printers and illustrators in the art departments of newspapers and advertising studios where they created advertisements, posters and colour supplements. Woodcuts, wood-engravings, lithographs and linocuts were a popular choice for commercial illustration as they were ideal for creating sharp, detailed images that could be used in conjunction with letterpress printing.¹⁶ They were also a much cheaper option than photo-engraved illustrations,¹⁷ or the photolithography process patented by Frederick Sears of the Government Printing Office in Wellington in 1908.¹⁸ Even as late as 1943, trainee commercial printers and illustrators were still being taught wood-engraving, linocutting and lithography as well as the latest developments in process-engraving and offset-lithography.¹⁹ Limited though this vocational training was, it at least offered Pakeha students an opportunity to gain rudimentary skills in printmaking.²⁰

Given the paucity of fine art training available, artists wishing to study creative printmaking often left New Zealand to train in London and Europe where printmaking

¹⁵ Mary M. McLean argued that “The study of the growing mind has revealed the fact that a young child is not specially interested in drawing squares, oblongs, and cubes, or in copying intricate curved designs such as was the South Kensington fashion a generation ago”. Mary M. McLean, “The Teaching of Drawing”, *The Forerunner*, (Havelock North), No 5, September 1909, pp. 149-150. Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

¹⁶ Charles Hackleman, *Commercial Engraving and Printing, Commercial Illustrating and Printing by all Processes*, Indianapolis: Commercial Engraving Publishing Company, 1924, pp. 369-372.

¹⁷ Wilson & Horton Ltd (N.Z.), *The New Zealand Herald 1863-1933*, Auckland: Wilson and Horton Ltd, 1933, p. 8.

¹⁸ R. A. McKay, (ed.), *A History of Printing in New Zealand, 1830-1940*, Wellington: Wellington Club of Printing House Craftsmen, p. 109, Ferrymead Printing Society Library.

¹⁹ John Mills Thomasson, “Lecture Notes on Typographical Drawing and Design”, Christchurch Art Gallery Archives.

²⁰ A system of educational apartheid made access to printmaking training all but impossible for Māori students. The majority were educated in Native Schools where training was aimed at preparing them for employment as farmhands and domestic servants. M. King, “Between Two Worlds”, Geoffrey Rice (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, *ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

was undergoing a revival. Rather than choosing to join Modernist printmakers associated with the Vorticists, Futurists or Expressionists, they studied under traditional etchers such as Frank Brangwyn, Sir Henry Tonks or Sir Frank Short. They returned to New Zealand equipped to create conservatively executed etchings of British and European landscapes, historic buildings and peasants, but remained largely unaware of developments in contemporary graphic art. Mina Arndt, for example, left Wellington in 1907 to train under Frank Brangwyn in London and Herman Struck in Berlin. When she returned to New Zealand in 1915, she had developed a printmaking style that Anne Kirker described as having a “sombre, Rembrandt-like quality”.²¹ Even studying under a modern artist was no guarantee that a student would develop a more contemporary style of printmaking. Edith Collier studied under the innovative Australian artist Margaret Macpherson (Preston) from 1915 until 1917,²² but her subsequent prints of English water mills and Irish cottages betrayed little sign of modernity.

Quite unexpectedly, commercial artists, rather than those in the fine arts, were the first to challenge such deference to traditional British and European models, and this questioning led to the advent of a school of New Zealand printmaking. The printmakers who initiated the process were associated the Auckland Quoin Club.

1.1 Auckland Printmaking

The Quoin Club was formed in 1916 by Auckland artists Thomas Gulliver and Arnold Goodwin who were concerned that little was being done to encourage interest in the graphic arts and crafts in the Auckland region.²³ Although Edward Payton, the Director of the Elam School of Art, offered classes in etching, printmaking was not officially part of the curriculum. Payton had studied at the Birmingham Municipal School of Art, specialised in etching at the Royal College of Art, and had also qualified

²¹ Anne Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years*, East Roseville, N.S.W.: Craftsman House, 1993, p. 56.

²² Joanna Drayton, *Edith Collier, Her Life and Work 1885-1964*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1999, p. 34.

²³ Arnold Goodwin, “The Quoin Club”, p.1, hand-written notes, 1972. Quoin Club File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

as an art master at the National Art Training School in South Kensington.²⁴ In 1888 he produced a portfolio of etchings of the Auckland and Rotorua regions, but photography rather than etching had become his all-consuming interest.²⁵ Etchers Harry Wallace and David Payne taught art at Auckland's Seddon Memorial Technical College, but printmaking classes offered there were designed for printing industry apprentices rather than artists.²⁶ In addition, prints rarely featured in exhibitions organised by the Auckland Society of Arts.

Gulliver and Goodwin decided to rectify matters by establishing a club that would specifically promote the graphic arts and crafts. When the Auckland Society of Arts refused them permission to rent a room in the Society's premises for this purpose, they hired two rooms as a clubroom in Mining Chambers, an old commercial building in Exchange Lane.²⁷ They called their group the Quoin Club, taking their name from a quoin, a printing device used to lock a relief print into a metal chase to secure it for printing. The Quoin Club held its first meeting on 5 September 1916, and membership was restricted to those with an active interest in the graphic arts. The Club's foundation members included: Gulliver, a civil engineer with the Railways Department; Goodwin, a commercial artist with *The New Zealand Herald* and later Director of The Carlton Studio Advertising Agency; Percy Bagnall, Head of the Art Studio at *The New Zealand Herald*; Albert Hooper, a commercial artist who joined Goodwin as a partner at the Carlton Studio; Eric Warner, Head of Lithography at Bretts Publishing; Reuben Watts, silversmith and architect William Gummer.²⁸ This core group was soon augmented by

²⁴ David Angeloro, "Payton, Edward William", *Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Painter-Etchers 1800-1940*, Australian Visual Arts Database, Documentation Pty Ltd, Discovery Media and David Angeloro, 1995, CD-Rom.

²⁵ Simon Franks, "Elam, 1890-1983: A History of the Elam School of Fine Arts", M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1984, p. 11.

²⁶ Seddon Memorial Technical College, *Diamond Jubilee of the Seddon Memorial Technical College 1903-1963*, Auckland: S.M.T.C., 1963, p. 4.

²⁷ Gilbert Meadows, "Some Random Notes on the Quoin Club 1916-1929 together with a word or two on a few of its members", p. 1, NZ MS 802, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

²⁸ These members are recorded as having paid their first subscriptions to the Quoin Club on 5 September 1916. Quoin Club Ledger Book, MS 42, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

the election of several other artists including David Payne, now Art Director of Chandler & Co Advertising Agency; James Fitzgerald, lithographic artist and owner of the Medusa Studio, Marcus King, draughtsman and silversmith Arthur Mason Heap.²⁹

Given their commercial backgrounds, few would have expected the members to be ideologically committed to the Arts and Crafts movement, but describing themselves as craft-workers, they stated their objectives were “to provide a common ground on which workers in the arts and crafts may meet...” and “to endeavour to induce by every means a better standard of appreciation of the applied and fine arts...”³⁰ Alexa Johnston has shown that Gulliver, Payne, Warner, Hooper, Fitzgerald and Watts had previously been members of the Auckland Society of Arts and Crafts, which briefly existed in 1912 as a splinter group from the Auckland Society of Arts.³¹ There were also distinct parallels between the aims of the Quoin Club and a group of Havelock North artists and writers known as The Havelock Work. Since 1908 they had been promoting William Morris's Art and Craft ideals through their monthly journal, *The Forerunner*.³² Like Morris and members of The Havelock Work, Quoin Club members looked for beauty in everyday life, disdained the distinctions between the fine and applied arts, and took great pride in their craftsmanship. The Quoin Club printmakers, however, did not share The Havelock Work's nostalgia for the past.³³ While interested in traditional methods of creating prints, Quoin Club members were equally at ease experimenting with the latest

²⁹ Percy Bagnall (1884-1958), James Fitzgerald (1869-1945), Arnold Goodwin (1890-1978), Thomas Gulliver (1891-1933), Marcus King (1891-1985), Eric Warner (1879-1968), David Payne, (1880-1959) - See David Angeloro, *ibid.* William Gummer (1884-1966) - See Ian J. Lochhead, ‘Gummer, William Henry 1884-1966’. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>. Arthur Mason Heap (1888-1950), Albert Horace Hooper (1894-1977), William Reuben Watts (1869-1940), - See Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *We Learnt To See. Elam's Rutland Group 1935-1958*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2004.

³⁰ “Quoin Club Rules”, Quoin Club Ledger, NZ MS 42, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

³¹ Alexa Johnston, “T. V. Gulliver, A Catalogue of His Graphic Art”, M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1979, p. 6.

³² H. Weyergang, “Aims and Objectives”, *The Forerunner*, No 6, October 1909, pp. 161-162. Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

³³ For example, The Havelock Work staged an Old English Village Fete and a Shakespearean Pageant 1911-1912. J. H. Von Dadelszen, “The Havelock Work, 1909-1939”, *Archifacts*, June 1984, No 2, p. 41.

techniques in commercial printing technology. In effect, they integrated Arts and Craft ideals into their working life, whether it was in creating a print for a gallery wall, a bookplate for a client or a poster for a tramcar.

Although they described themselves as craftsmen, the majority of Quoin Club members were formally trained professional artists. Goodwin, for example, had studied at the Académie Julian and the Leicestershire School of Art. Bagnall had studied at the Art Students' League in New York and the National Gallery of Victoria School in Australia, while Warner had trained at the London County Council's Bolt Court School of Art. King had studied at the Elam School of Art, and Payne at the Birmingham Municipal School of Art. Payne's artistic reputation led to his inclusion in Charles Holme's *Art of the British Empire Overseas* (1917).³⁴ Ironically, Gulliver, the only artist with no formal art training, overseas or commercial experience whatever was destined to become the leading member of the Quoin Club. A civil engineer by profession, he studied briefly at Elam in 1910 but left in disgust when he realised that he knew more about art than his tutor.³⁵ Largely self-taught, Gulliver emerged as the country's most innovative printmaker, and tirelessly championed New Zealand printmaking.

In many respects, the Quoin Club functioned as an unofficial art school and art society. The Club premises were located close to the advertising studios and newspaper offices where members worked, and they met daily at lunchtime to share their printmaking skills.³⁶ In addition, members attended life-drawing classes held either weekly or twice weekly in the evenings at the Club (Fig. 1).³⁷ The Club was better equipped for printmaking than most art schools, and the annual subscription fee of two guineas was reduced to ten shillings for student members. This provided students at Elam School of Art and Seddon Technical College with the opportunity to receive printmaking training which their own institutions did not offer. Club members shared

³⁴ Charles Holme, (ed.), *Art of the British Empire Overseas - Canada, Australia, New Zealand & South Africa*, London: The Studio, 1917, p. 88.

³⁵ John Barr, "T. V. Gulliver 1891-1933", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 6, No 2, December 1933, p. 75.

³⁶ Arnold Goodwin, "The Quoin Club", *ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

subscriptions to periodicals such as *The Studio*, and had access to Gulliver's numerous books on printmaking, and his collection of Japanese and European prints.³⁸



Fig. 1. Quoin Club Life Class, 1919, Left to right -Arnold Goodwin, unnamed model, Eric Warner, Percy Bagnall, Tom Gulliver, unknown, David Payne.³⁹
(Elam Archive, Fine Arts Library, University of Auckland)

Goodwin recalled that through the Club's commercial contacts, members were able to borrow printmaking tools and materials, including a lithographic press and etching press from *The New Zealand Herald*, and this led to a great deal of experimentation in linocutting and wood-engraving, etching (drypoint and soft ground), and in brush chalk and colour lithography.⁴⁰ It also led to more innovative printmaking, for unlike etching, lithography and linocutting were not encumbered with centuries of tradition in regards to style or subject matter. Access to the lithographic expertise of Warner, Bagnall and Fitzgerald was particularly invaluable in overcoming the trade

³⁸ Alexa Johnston, p. 48.

³⁹ The photograph is not annotated but the figures were identified by Alexa Johnston in her thesis, "T. V. Gulliver, A Catalogue of His Graphic Art", *ibid*.

⁴⁰ Arnold Goodwin, p. 3.

secrecy which had prevented artists from adopting lithography for decades.⁴¹ The Club frequently organised its own exhibitions, offering members exposure denied them by the Auckland Society of Arts, which included few prints in its annual exhibitions.

Members held an exhibition of “artistic printing and posterwork” soon after the Club was established in 1916 but records of this are yet to be traced. The Club's first large-scale and most successful exhibition was held in April 1919.⁴² Works exhibited included lithographs, woodcuts, linocuts, watercolours, illuminated manuscripts, jewellery and bookplates.⁴³ Gulliver exhibited *Coal Hoist*, (etching), 1917, (Plate 1), a finely etched print which focussed on the tall and narrow metal struts of a feature of Auckland's industrial landscape, imbuing it with a gravitas artists normally reserved for historic monuments. In comparison, his wood-engraving of the Khyber Pass Brewery, *Malt & Hops*, 1918, (Plate 2), was vigorously cut in a style completely without precedent in New Zealand art. He used thick, harsh black strokes to depict the brewery and set it against a lurid yellow sky, with smoke belching from the chimney. The overall impression given was that the building could hardly contain the activities going on inside its walls.

Also unprecedented was Warner's colour lithograph *Mill's Lane Evening*, (Version 1), 1919, (Plate 3), a view of the lane at the rear of the Quoin Club premises. While printmakers usually placed architectural subjects in the centre of their compositions and attempted to reproduce features of buildings in great detail, Warner took an architectonic approach. He suggested the height of the buildings through the use of tall, flattened ochre coloured oblongs, set against a dark blue night sky, and virtually no architectural details were included apart from simple rectangles to suggest windows. The print showed all the abstraction and rich colouration of contemporary

⁴¹ In Britain, Joseph Pennell had to employ a lithographer to print lithographs created by artists belonging to the Senefelder Club, as trade printers refused to teach them how to carry out the process for themselves. P. Gilmour, (ed.), *Lasting Impressions: Lithography as Art*, London: Alexandria Press, 1988, p. 308.

⁴² The catalogue of this exhibition has not yet been traced. This description is based on the contents of the portfolio of prints released during the exhibition and contemporary reviews.

⁴³ “Etchings and Lithography, Quoin Club Exhibition”, *The Auckland Star*, 15 April 1919, p. 10. Quoin Club File, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

poster art, and may also have been influenced by an interest in Japanese woodcuts as Quoin Club members were known to hold these in very high regard.⁴⁴ Bagnall's lithographs *The Mill*, c.1919, (Plate 4), which featured the Auckland Chelsea Sugar Works, and *The Wharf*, c.1919, (Plate 5), a dockside scene, gave the impression of being snapshots of industrial life. Their air of immediacy was achieved by Bagnall using sketchy strokes of the lithographic crayon to suggest a scene captured in haste, a technique that masked his meticulously planned composition.

The Quoin Club's first portfolio of prints was also released during this exhibition, and it contained the following eight prints. Goodwin's etching *The Timber Yard, (Auckland Harbour)*, 1919, (Plate 6), placed the viewer among the wooden beams and pulleys of a loading bay, looking out onto the Auckland waterfront. Compositionally it showed a direct debt to Joseph Pennell's lithograph *The Bottom of Gatun Lock*, from his *Panama Canal Series*, 1912. Warner's etching *The Goose Saw*, 1919, (Plate 7), depicted a labourer in an Auckland sawmill, and also had an off-centre composition, with the workbench placed diagonally across the picture plane. Again, this technique created a sense of a scene glimpsed in passing. His wood-engraving, *Tree Trunks*, 1919, focussed on the pattern of the tree bark to the virtual exclusion of everything else. Bagnall's *Portrait*, 1919, was a colour etching which reflected his obvious affection for his father. Fitzgerald's etching *The Don*, 1919, was a study of an elderly gentleman, executed in a style reminiscent of seventeenth-century Dutch portraits. Payne's colour lithograph *St Matthew's At Night*, 1919, (Plate 8), was a most unusual combination of the sacred and the secular. He presented the Auckland city-centre church lit by floodlight like a cinema, against a dark blue sky. Gulliver's interpretation of the same church was a delicate etching, *St Matthew's from Baker Street*, 1919, which showed the church from an unusual angle across a range of rooftops. In contrast, his starkly simple woodcut *The Pontoon*, 1919, reduced an industrial barge to a few geometric shapes.

Public response to the exhibition was extremely positive with *The Auckland Star* describing it as “one of the most arresting private shows which has taken place in

⁴⁴ Alexa Johnston, p. 24.

Auckland for some years”.⁴⁵ Goodwin's etching, *The Timber Yard*, 1919, was described as powerful, while Warner's *The Sugar Work Sheds*, (etching), 1918 and Gulliver's *Carter's Pottery*, (etching), 1916, were praised for having “truth and art that placed these prosaic buildings amongst the things that are beautiful”.⁴⁶ The critic also commented on the printmaker's use of colour lithography which “is hardly ever seen in any New Zealand Art Exhibition, yet it is one of the most artistic methods of expression”. Warner's *Mill's Lane Evening* showed both rich colour sense and “the wonderful charms to be seen in Auckland streets by eyes alive to the beauty in everyday subjects. This lithograph would not have been out of place amongst the best of this kind of work shown in the older lands”.⁴⁷ Quoin Club members must have been delighted by the comment that “None of the work was in any way commercial but was produced entirely for the love of art”.⁴⁸

The attention the exhibition received from Auckland newspapers was in marked contrast to the indifference shown by New Zealand's only journal of the arts, *The Triad*. It continued to feature traditional etchings by conservative Wellington and Christchurch artists, and omitted any mention of the Quoin Club or its activities. John Barr, Director of the Auckland City Art Gallery and City Librarian, purchased one of the Quoin Club portfolios for the city collection, and members were sufficiently proud of their prints that they sent a presentation portfolio to the British art journal *The Studio*.⁴⁹ So much public interest was shown by visitors to the exhibition that the Quoin Club decided to extend membership to individuals who were not artists but had an interest in the graphic arts.⁵⁰ Among those invited to join were John Barr, Auckland City Art Gallery Director, Alan Mulgan the Literary Editor of *The Auckland Star*, architects R. Lippincot and M. Draffin, sculptor Richard Gross and lawyer Richard Singer.

⁴⁵ “Etchings and Lithography. Quoin Club Exhibition”, *The Auckland Star*, *ibid*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ *The Studio* did not subsequently review the portfolio.

⁵⁰ Gilbert Meadows, p. 3.

Looking at the prints in the exhibition and portfolio it is evident that by international standards the Quoin Club was by no means a radical, avant-garde group. Despite their openness to new subject matter and print media, Club members never lost sight of their Arts and Crafts ideals, a factor that tempered their taste for modernism. In terms of New Zealand art, however, Quoin Club printmakers were unusually modern in their choice of subject matter — while their colleagues in the fine arts were creating formulaic etchings of peasants, historic buildings and English water mills, they were creating prints of Auckland's factories, streets and rural hinterland.⁵¹ The emphasis that the Quoin Club printmakers placed on contemporary subject matter was a reflection of the fact that the majority were commercial artists who focussed on present-day Auckland in their work art, and this also became the focus of their fine art. Prints by Quoin Club members would have been instantly recognisable to Auckland art lovers as everyday images of their own city and region. It was at least a decade before such regionalist imagery was adopted by painters like Christopher Perkins and Rita Angus.

The Quoin Club's regionalism was, in fact, related to the wider international regionalist movement, which saw American, Australian, British and Canadian artists adopting regionalist imagery in an attempt to build arts of national identity. According to Gordon Brown, "The outlook adopted by most people concerned with the idea of a national identity essentially was one of regionalism, and regional truth for the New Zealander was inevitably linked with landscape imagery".⁵² While New Zealand painters certainly took this route to regionalism, the Quoin Club printmakers created urban and industrial imagery as well as rural landscapes. It is highly likely their unusual approach stemmed from Goodwin and Bagnall's exposure to American regionalist printmaking, which placed as much emphasis on city and industrial scenes as it did on the country's rural heartland.⁵³ Goodwin would have become familiar with American

⁵¹ Quoin Club prints also refute claims that images of working life were rare in New Zealand until the Depression of the 1930s. Jonathan Smart for example, argues that such images were scarce before the social unrest that accompanied the Depression. J. Smart, "Art and Social Comment in New Zealand, 1930-1982", M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1982, p. 15.

⁵² Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1920-1940, Adaptation and Nationalism*, Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1975, p. 62.

⁵³ Susan Sheehan, *American Modernist Prints: 1900-1945*, New York: Susan Sheehan Inc, 1987, introduction, np.

regionalism while working for Carlton Illustrators in New York prior to his arrival in New Zealand in 1913.⁵⁴ Bagnall would have been made aware of it while training at the Art Students' League, also in New York, before returning to Auckland in 1914 to manage the art department of *The New Zealand Herald*.⁵⁵ Although Gulliver had never travelled overseas, he was a great admirer of American etcher Joseph Pennell and his prints of city and industrial life. He owned several books of Pennell's etchings, including his *Pictures of the Wonders of Work*.⁵⁶



Fig. 2. T. V. Gulliver, sketchbook,
(Elam Archive, Fine Arts Library, University of Auckland)

In 1919, Gulliver and Bagnall also issued a portfolio of colour lithographs entitled *Six New Zealand Birds*, which included: Bagnall's *Pukeko*, *Pied Shag* and *Black*

⁵⁴ "Drama Was His World", *The New Zealand Herald*, 27 March 1978, np. Quoin Club File, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

⁵⁵ "Percy R. Bagnall", *The New Zealand Herald*, 6 February 1958, np. Quoin Club File, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

⁵⁶ Alexa Johnston, p. 196.

Backed Gulls, and Gulliver's *Pied Fantail*, *Kingfisher* and *Morepork*. One of the most outstanding was Gulliver's *Pied Fantail*, 1919, (Plate 9). However, it owed more to Japanese woodblock printing than to contemporary lithography, and reflected his admiration of *Ukiyo-e* prints.⁵⁷ Gulliver's careful preparatory drawing for this print demonstrated his Arts and Crafts approach to printmaking, which placed great emphasis on careful study of nature (Fig. 2). The print was dominated by a bird perched on a branch, displaying its tail like an exotic fan, and Gulliver used calligraphic strokes to construct a forest fretwork in the background. The black branches of the forest provided the perfect foil for the brightly coloured yellow and green fantail which demanded the viewer's attention. The aquamarine sky visible through the trees was created by using stippling, giving the print a rich and textured appearance. In comparison, Bagnall's *Pukeko*, 1919, (Plate 10), showed a distinct debt to modern advertising, with its use of bright colours and simplified form, and the manner in which the bird was depicted strutting out of the picture frame like an advertising icon.

Innocuous though these prints now appear, they reflect Gulliver and Bagnall's concern for indigenous birds, a most unusual stance given that the Department of Agriculture classified some as vermin, and was paying hunters bounties to destroy them.⁵⁸ Public concern was mounting against this policy, and just months before Bagnall and Gulliver published their portfolio, the Acclimatisation Society urged the Government to introduce legislation to protect remaining native birds.⁵⁹ Evidence of the growth of a conservation movement had been provided by the establishment of the short-lived New Zealand Forest and Bird Protection Society in 1914 and the New Zealand Forestry League in 1916.⁶⁰ It is not known if Gulliver and Bagnall were actually involved in the budding conservation movement, but their choice of subject matter would suggest they had at least some sympathy for its aims. Interest in *Six New*

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁸ David Young, *Our Islands, Ourselves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004, p. 113.

⁵⁹ "Preserving Native Birds. Amendment of Law Urged", *The Auckland Weekly News*, 13 February 1919, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Paul Star & Lynne Lochhead, "Children of the Burnt Bush. New Zealanders and the Indigenous Remnant, 1880-1930", Eric Pawson & Tom Brooking (eds.), *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 130-131.

Zealand Birds was so great that the Quoin Club made an unusual departure from convention. Normally they produced small editions, sufficient only to give other members examples of their work; however an additional 100 sets of this portfolio were offset printed to meet public demand.⁶¹

The prints created by members of the Quoin Club represented a distinct break with the topographical, anthropological and botanical prints by visiting nineteenth century artists such as Jules Dumont D'Urville and Augustus Earle. These artists recorded the New Zealand landscape, its inhabitants and flora and fauna in detached, scientific detail for an overseas audience of European governments, missionaries and potential settlers.⁶² More often than not, their prints were lithographic reproductions of their paintings and drawings, rather than original prints in their own right. Where D'Urville and Earle were recording the unknown and the exotic, Quoin Club printmakers were celebrating the mundane, finding inspiration in the streets, factories, rural hinterland, flora and fauna of Auckland, in original works created for their own pleasure and that of their friends. These prints of everyday scenes placed them among the first twentieth-century New Zealand regionalists. Innovative in terms of subject matter and print media, they also invigorated printmaking by using flattened and simplified forms, rich coloration and unusual viewpoints in their compositions.

One of the most striking features about prints created during this period was the contrast between the contemporaneity of the Quoin Club printmakers in Auckland and the conservatism of printmakers in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Few printmakers in these cities were familiar with commercial printing techniques or contemporary graphic art. Most were, unfortunately for the development of printmaking in their regions, content to be members of local art societies, and their prints reflected the conservative nature of these organisations.

⁶¹ Anne Kirker, "Lithography in New Zealand: A Coming of Age", Pat Gilmour (ed.), *Lasting Impressions, Lithography As Art*, *ibid.*, p. 297.

⁶² M & D. G. Ellis, *Early Prints of New Zealand 1642-1875*, Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints Ltd, 1975, pp. 37-59.

1.2 Wellington Printmaking

Wellington printmakers of note included the brothers Edward Noel Barraud and William Barraud, Mina Arndt, Harry Linley Richardson, James McDonald and Flora Scales. Although the Barraud brothers, Arndt and Scales had extensive overseas experience, they stuck resolutely to a traditional style of etching, and shied away from contemporary subject matter;⁶³ while Richardson and McDonald, whose etchings demonstrated an Edwardian realism, were among the few to focus on contemporary Wellington subject matter.

Edward Noel Barraud and William Barraud are believed to be the first New Zealand-born artists to become etchers, and though largely self-taught, it is likely that they received some instruction from their father the artist Charles Barraud.⁶⁴ William was born in 1850 and trained as a chemist while his younger brother Edward Noel, born in 1857, was an accountant. The brothers travelled extensively in England, Europe and Australia, and created numerous etchings of scenes recorded during their visits.⁶⁵ They worked in a very naïve, traditional style, perpetuating the traditions of nineteenth-century New Zealand printmakers well into the 1920s. Examples of Edward Noel Barraud's prints of this type included *On the Canal at Bruges*, (etching), 1910 and *Old Bridge, Nuremberg*, (etching), 1910, while William Barraud created *In the Bazaars, Cairo*, (etching) and *Italian Evening*, (mezzotint), both 1900-1925. Although many of their works were of exotic locations, at least half their output consisted of New Zealand landscapes. Edward Noel Barraud's etching, *Manuka Scrub Paekakariki*, was reproduced in the October 1912 issue of *The Triad*, where Charles Wilson generously described it as showing the influence of British printmakers Sir Frank Short and Seymour Hayden.⁶⁶ Something of the sentimental nature of William Francis Barraud's

⁶³ It was not until Flora Scales returned to Europe in 1931 to train under Hans Hoffman in Munich that she adopted a Modernist approach to her artmaking. Barbi de Lange, 'Scales, Helen Flora Victoria 1887-1985'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>.

⁶⁴ David Angeloro, "Barraud, Edward Noel", *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide & Handbook*, Christchurch, Avon Fine Prints Ltd, 1980, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁶ Charles Wilson, p. 30.

printmaking was revealed in *The “Rambler”, her ramblings over, Porirua*, (etching), c.1915, (Plate 11), which featured a derelict boat on a beach with the palisades of a Māori pa visible in the background.

A more professionally qualified artist, but one who demonstrated the same conservatism, was Mina Arndt. She trained at the Wellington Technical College, where it is believed she was introduced to etching by R. Herdman-Smith and George Nordstrom.⁶⁷ In 1907 she left to study at Frank Brangwyn's London School of Art, and with Elizabeth and Stanhope Forbes at Newlyn. By 1909 she had relocated to Berlin, where she studied painting under Lovis Corinth and etching under Hermann Struck, her choice of tutors reflecting her dislike of modern German art.⁶⁸ Under Struck's guidance, Arndt created etchings of canal scenes, peasants and landscapes, in a style which emulated that of the Old Masters.⁶⁹ Her etching, *Study After Rembrandt*, c.1909-1912, (Plate 12), for example, was a homage to Rembrandt, printed in sepia-coloured ink to deliberately enhance its air of antiquity. When World War One broke out in 1914, Arndt was detained as an alien prisoner in Berlin before being repatriated to Wellington.⁷⁰

Arndt staged a solo exhibition in her Wellington studio in March 1915, showing over 70 etchings and drawings and ten oil paintings she had created while in Europe.⁷¹ Her timing could not have been worse, the general public was in no mood to welcome the work of an artist of German descent and training, even if she had suffered the indignity of being detained in Berlin. Anti-German sentiment had been rife in the country since the outbreak of World War One; several immigrants of German descent had been arrested on suspicion of being spies and held in a prisoner of war camp on Wellington's Somes Island; businesses with Germanic sounding names had been

⁶⁷ Dorothée Pauli, “Mina Arndt (1885-1926): The Making of a New Zealand Artist”, PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 2000, p. 60.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 143.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 169.

⁷⁰ Jane Clendon, ‘Arndt, Hermina 1885-1926’. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 11 December 2002, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

⁷¹ Dorothée Pauli, p. 191.

vandalised, and public harassment resulted in numerous German families Anglicising their surnames in a bid to avert further hostility.⁷² Arndt's exhibition included etchings such as *Beggar Man After Rembrandt*, c.1909-1912, and *Charlottenburg Bridge*, c.1909-1914, European subject matter which no longer appealed to Wellington art lovers buoyed with patriotism generated by the outbreak of war, and keen to acquire works that reflected New Zealand's nascent sense of national identity. Dorothee Pauli claims that another misjudgement was allowing her family to stage the exhibition as if it were an event on the social calendar, creating the impression that she was a dilettante rather than a committed, professional artist.⁷³

After this disastrous exhibition Arndt accepted a private commission to create a series of etchings of Māori figures (untraced). Her adoption of such subject matter did not appear to be driven by any personal interest in Māori culture, rather she was typical of New Zealand-born but Europe-trained artists of the period, who switched from depicting European peasants to Māori figures to accommodate the changing tastes of the art buying public.⁷⁴ Painter C. F. Goldie had set the precedent a decade earlier, creating images of a people many considered to be on the edge of extinction.⁷⁵ In 1917 Arndt married businessman Leo Manoy and spent the rest of her life working in rural Motueka, Nelson. Isolated from artistic stimulation or exhibition opportunities, the quality of her printmaking began to deteriorate.⁷⁶ Although Arndt exhibited etchings with the Australian Painter-Engravers' Society during the early 1920s, her main contribution to printmaking was as a teacher rather than a practitioner.

A major reason why printmakers like Arndt left to study overseas was that the art training offered by Wellington Technical College was designed for trade apprentices,

⁷² Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, *Keeping a Low Profile: An Oral History of German Immigration to New Zealand*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2002, p. 16.

⁷³ Dorothee Pauli, p. 192.

⁷⁴ Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures*, Dunedin: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council & Hocken Library, 1972, pp. 40-43.

⁷⁵ Roger Blackley, *Goldie*, Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery & David Bateman, 1997, p. 50.

⁷⁶ Dorothee Pauli, pp. 213-215.

with emphasis placed on lithography for press and book illustration.⁷⁷ In 1908 William Sanderson La Trobe, the College's Director, decided to rectify matters by recruiting a highly trained professional artist to run the College's Industrial & Applied Arts Department. British artist Harry Linley Richardson, who had been trained in the South Kensington system at the Westminster School of Art, was selected for the position.⁷⁸ Wellington Technical College was affiliated with the South Kensington Art School, making Richardson an ideal candidate. Richardson had also trained at Henry Blackburn's Press Art School, Goldsmith's College, the Académie Julian and was experienced as a book and journal illustrator and poster designer.⁷⁹

Richardson's commercial experience was exceptional among Wellington printmakers, and he was the first to use commercial printing processes such as lithography to create fine art prints. For example, *A Wet Night, (The Chemist's Shop)*, (colour lithograph), c.1911, (Plate 13), featured shoppers outside a brightly-lit city shop on a dark night. Sketchily executed, it emphasised the reflected light of the shop and the silhouettes of the figures in the rain-soaked road and pavement. Richardson was elected Vice-President of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts (NZAFA) in 1911, an office he retained until 1913.⁸⁰ Despite its grandiose title, the Academy was Wellington's local art society rather than a national body, and one which art critic Charles Wilson frequently criticised for including so few prints in its annual exhibitions.⁸¹ Richardson's presence on the Academy's Council alleviated the situation somewhat, and his own etchings were regularly accepted for exhibition. One such example was his finely executed urban landscape, *Wellington from Kelburn near the Bowling Green*, (etching), 1916, (Plate 14). This was also featured in *Art In Australia*, in an article by Maurice Hurst who ranked him as the foremost etcher in New Zealand.⁸²

⁷⁷ Wellington Technical College, *Syllabus 1911*, Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1911, pp. 43-57. Wellington High School Library.

⁷⁸ Jane Vial, *H. Linley Richardson 1878-1947*, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 1986, p. 21.

⁷⁹ H. Linley Richardson, "Reminiscences", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XI, No 1, 1939, p. 8.

⁸⁰ Jane Vial, p. 16.

⁸¹ Charles Wilson, p. 29.

⁸² Maurice Hurst, "Etching in New Zealand", *Art In Australia*, Special Edition - Australian

Richardson was promoted to the position of Head of the Art Department at Wellington Technical College in 1915, and introduced classes for artists in etching, lithography, relief printing and poster production.⁸³ He moved between the commercial and fine art sectors with ease, and in addition to his teaching studies, created advertisements for the *New Zealand Times* and Stewart Dawson & Co Ltd, and designed bookplates and postage stamps.⁸⁴ He also ensured that his students gained practical experience in the commercial arts sector while they were still at the College.⁸⁵ This met with Director La Trobe's approval, for he strongly believed that students should be taught by teachers with close links to industry, and gain practical experience as part of their training.⁸⁶ Richardson was also fascinated by Māori art and soon after his arrival began studying Māori artifacts at the Dominion Museum.⁸⁷ Recognising the depth of his interest, the Museum allocated him a studio in its premises.

Through his studies there Richardson met the Museum's Acting Director, James McDonald, and it is likely that Richardson taught McDonald how to etch.⁸⁸ McDonald was born in Tokomairiro, Otago in 1865, and studied with Girolamo Nerli, James Nairn and Nugent Welch before travelling to Melbourne to study under Frederick McCubbin at the National Gallery of Victoria Art School.⁸⁹ He returned to New Zealand in 1901 where he worked as a photographer with the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts. His responsibilities included travelling through the country with historian James Cowan, photographing places of cultural significance.⁹⁰ McDonald's experience as a

and New Zealand Etching, No 9, 1921, np.

⁸³ Jane Vial, p. 21.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 16-22.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸⁶ J. Nicol, p. 144.

⁸⁷ H. Linley Richardson, p. 15.

⁸⁸ David Angeloro, "McDonald, James Ingram", *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Una Platts, p. 159.

⁹⁰ J. Dennis, 'McDonald, James Ingram 1865-1935'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

photographer was evident in his etching entitled *In the Laboratory, (The Test)*, 1914, (Plate 15), which showed two scientists at work, their movements frozen as if captured on a photographic negative. McDonald's other etchings of the period depicted architectural scenes; *Admiralty Steps, Wellington*, 1915 and *Government Buildings, Wellington*, 1915, as well as *Hamiora Tu, Maori Guide 68th Regiment*, 1914, and *The Willow Tree*, 1915. While printmaking was never a major part of McDonald's output, he was responsible for teaching several other Wellington artists how to etch.



Fig. 3. Flora Scales, *The Home-Coming*, (etching), c.1917

Among them was Flora Scales, who had studied at the Frank Calderon School of Animal Painting in London in 1908 and with Stanhope Forbes at Newlyn before returning to Wellington in 1912.⁹¹ Once McDonald taught Scales how to etch, she began creating pastoral scenes such as *The Home-Coming*, (etching), c.1917, (Fig. 3) and *The Woodcart*, (etching), c.1917. Bland and sentimental, these etchings betrayed no hint of the modernist painter she would later become.⁹² Although Charles Wilson railed against people who decorated their walls with such “hideous sentimental

⁹¹ Barbi de Lange, *ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

engravings,”⁹³ demand for reassuring prints increased as the public became aware of the numbers of New Zealand soldiers killed or wounded at Gallipoli, Passchendaele and the Battle of the Somme. Throughout the western world, pure abstraction was viewed as too analytical and inhuman to convey the ensuing grief and there was what Richard Cork has described as a “return to order” among even the most avant-garde of artists.⁹⁴ John Williams has shown how in Australia this led to Arcadian nostalgia becoming the dominant cultural ideology, and with jingoism at record levels, any cosmopolitan, Modernist ideas were thought of as corrupt and decadent.⁹⁵ His analysis could equally be applied to New Zealand, where art society exhibitions became increasingly crowded with unspoiled landscapes and pastorals.

Unlike the Auckland Quoin Club, most Wellington printmakers showed little enthusiasm for innovative printmaking or new print media. Even when they switched from depicting European subject matter to creating images of their own city and the local landscape, their conservatism resulted in dull but technically proficient prints. To some extent this may have resulted from them feeling obliged to adopt contemporary New Zealand subject matter because of changing public tastes, rather than being driven by any personal enthusiasm for the subject. Only Harry Linley Richardson went on to have a long-term influence on New Zealand printmaking. Despite his conservatism, he mentored some of the most modern and innovative printmakers of the 1920s.

1.3 Christchurch Printmaking

Further south, Christchurch printmaking was even more hidebound than that of Wellington, and positively Victorian in style in comparison to that of the Quoin Club. The most prominent Canterbury printmakers were Richard Wallwork, known for his monochromatic etchings of mythological scenes and fairy stories, and Archibald Nicoll,

⁹³ Charles Wilson, “Mostly About Pictures”, *The Triad, A Monthly Magazine of Music, Science and Art*, 10 March 1915, p. 171.

⁹⁴ Richard Cork, *A Bitter Truth, Avant-Garde Art and the Great War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, p. 9.

⁹⁵ John F. Williams, *Quarantined Culture: Australian Reactions to Modernism 1913-1939*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 8.

who specialised in architectural etchings of British landmarks. Both were associated with the Canterbury College School of Art, a school which had been established in 1882 and was affiliated with the Science and Art Department of the South Kensington School in London.⁹⁶ As soon as the school opened, it offered courses in lithography, chromolithography, wood-engraving and etching, but the objective of printmaking taught at the School, as elsewhere in New Zealand at this time, was to prepare students to work as commercial printers and illustrators.⁹⁷ This was emphasised in the syllabus

The work carried on in this school has for its objects the systematic study of practical Art and its scientific principles, with a view to developing the application of Art to the requirements of Trade and Manufactures, together with the training of Art Masters and Mistresses.⁹⁸

The trade-orientated nature of the training was made explicit in the syllabus which contained lists of trades with recommended art courses alongside, to allow students to identify the ones that would best prepare them for their intended occupation.⁹⁹ In 1908 the School introduced free day classes in lithography, etching and book illustration “in order to provide instruction suitable for boys and girls leaving the primary schools, and requiring an elementary practical training before entering a trade or profession”.¹⁰⁰ The free day classes were gendered; courses in the lithographic department were open to boys, while girls could enrol in the Black and White and Book Illustration Department. R. Herdman-Smith, the Director of the School, offered classes in line etching and drypoint from 1910, but these too were vocationally orientated and designed for students intending to become architects, draughtsmen or cabinetmakers.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ J. Mane-Wheoki, “The High Arts in a Regional Culture-From Englishness to Self-Reliance”, John Cookson & Graeme Dunstall (eds.), *Southern Capital: Christchurch: Towards a City Biography 1850-2000*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2000, p. 306.

⁹⁷ Canterbury College School of Art, *Syllabus*, Christchurch: Tombs & Co, 1882, pp. 11-14. School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, preface.

⁹⁹ Canterbury College School of Art, *Syllabus 1906*, Christchurch: G. Tombs & Co, 1906, np. School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹⁰⁰ Canterbury College School of Art, *Prospectus of Free Day Courses, 1908*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1908, p. 1. School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹⁰¹ Canterbury College School of Art, *Syllabus 1910*, Christchurch: Alex Wildey, 1910, p. 18.

The artist who introduced the concept of printmaking as a fine art rather than a trade was Richard Wallwork, who was recruited from Britain to teach at the Canterbury College School of Art in 1911. Wallwork had enrolled at the Manchester Municipal School of Art in 1900 and spent six years studying there, attaining honours in all the South Kensington Art examinations he undertook, and also winning school prizes for painting, book illustration and poster design.¹⁰² He then studied at the Royal College of Art, Kensington, for two years where he majored in Mural and Decorative Painting, and studied etching and engraving under Sir Frank Short.¹⁰³ Wallwork's arrival caused quite a stir in Christchurch, and local journalists were seeking his views before he had even disembarked at Lyttleton in February 1911.¹⁰⁴ The interview recorded by the *Lyttleton Times* is interesting both for its title and content. The headline "Art At Home. Modern Tendencies. An Interview with Mr Wallwork" demonstrates how closely Canterbury residents identified with England, which they still referred to as home. Wallwork informed the journalists that artists "were paying a great deal of attention to reproductive art such as etching, colour etching and lithography; thus securing a broader field for their work".¹⁰⁵

In the year of their arrival, both Wallwork and his wife Elizabeth, a Slade School graduate, joined the Canterbury Society of Arts, and exhibited etchings in the Society's Arts & Crafts Exhibition.¹⁰⁶ The fairy-story subject matter favoured by Richard Wallwork was evident in *The Trio*, (drypoint), c.1910, (Plate 16), which presented a group of rabbits playing musical instruments. Wallwork lost no time in persuading Herdman-Smith to allow him to introduce classes in creative etching. This objective was easily achieved, as Herdman-Smith himself was an enthusiastic etcher whose prints

School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹⁰² Neil Roberts, *Richard and Elizabeth Wallwork*, Canterbury Vignettes Series, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 2000, p. 4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ "Art At Home. Modern Tendencies. An Interview with Mr Wallwork", *The Lyttleton Times*, 13 February 1911, p. 9. Christchurch Art Gallery Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Canterbury Society of Arts, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Arts & Crafts*, Christchurch, 3 October, 1911, np.

were beginning to attract critical attention.¹⁰⁷ In 1912 he forwarded Wallwork's proposal to the Museum and Library Committee, which gave its approval to non-vocational etching being added to the syllabus, subject to a minimum of eight paying students enrolling for the course.¹⁰⁸ In his next annual report Herdman-Smith reported that "The etching class has made steady progress, and some very creditable work was shown at the exhibition of students' work".¹⁰⁹ The future of etching in Canterbury looked promising; however the number of attendees dropped and on 18 March 1914 the Committee accepted Herdman-Smith's recommendation that the etching classes be discontinued.¹¹⁰ No explanation was given for the reduction in student numbers, but the cost of tuition may have been an issue.

Undeterred, Wallwork began offering etching classes to students at the studio installed in his new home in Gracefield Street, Christchurch. Charles Wilson, art critic of *The Triad*, visited the Wallworks at their home studio, and reported "[Richard's] tiny pictures of forest nymphs and dryads are instinct with grace and delicate charm".¹¹¹ Wilson noted that Wallwork had several etching pupils who were showing promise, and expressed the hope that art societies would do more to encourage etching. However, printmaking barely featured in annual exhibitions staged by the Canterbury Society of Arts, which preferred to relegate etchings to infrequently held art and craft exhibitions. Like Harry Linley Richardson, Wallwork went on to have a sustained influence on New Zealand printmaking as a practitioner, teacher and arts administrator.

¹⁰⁷ Herdman-Smith's etching, *Argument Yard, Whitby*, was featured in the October 1912 issue of *The Triad*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁸ Canterbury Museum & Library Committee, "Minutes, 15 May 1912", School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹⁰⁹ R. Herdman-Smith, "School of Art", *The Canterbury College 40th Annual Report*, Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1913, p. 13. School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹¹⁰ Canterbury Museum & Library Committee, "Minutes, 18 March 1914", School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury.

¹¹¹ Charles Wilson, "Art and Some Artists in Christchurch", *The Triad, A Monthly Magazine of Music, Science and Art*, 11 May 1914, p. 287.

While Wallwork was establishing himself at the Canterbury College School of Art, one of the School's former students and its future director, Archibald Nicoll, was studying painting overseas. Nicoll enrolled at the Westminster School of Art in 1911, the Royal Scottish Academy in 1912 and the Edinburgh School of Art in 1913.¹¹² At the latter he also attended lithography classes given by Ernest Jackson and etching with Joseph Pennell. After joining the teaching staff of the Edinburgh School of Art in 1913, Nicoll created a series of architectural etchings and drypoints of the medieval section of city. Most of these were traditionally executed, but his etching, *Building of the Ussher Hall*, 1913, (Fig. 4), indicated he was also capable of creating quite dramatic and memorable scenes of more contemporary subjects.

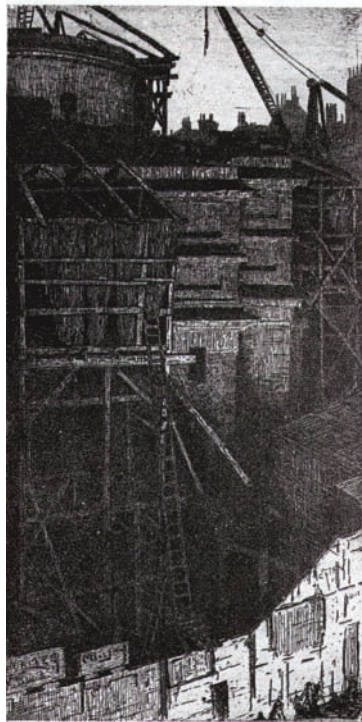


Fig. 4. Archibald Nicoll, *Building of the Ussher Hall*, (etching), 1913

At the outbreak of World War One, Nicoll enlisted in the New Zealand Field Artillery, and was severely injured at the Second Battle of the Somme.¹¹³ On his return to New Zealand, Nicoll taught at Wellington Technical College in 1918, and in 1920

¹¹² Neil Roberts, *Archibald Nicoll 1886-1953*, Canterbury Vignette Series, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 2000, p. 31.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

took up the position of Director of the Canterbury College School of Art. He produced very few prints after this, but taught many Canterbury printmakers and encouraged them to create architectural etchings of the city. Wallwork and Nicoll may have been traditional etchers but their presence on the staff at the Canterbury College School of Art meant that printmaking now enjoyed institutional support at the highest level, and creative printmaking had at last established a foothold in Christchurch.

1.4 Dunedin Printmaking

A survey of Otago Art Society exhibition catalogues of the period 1900 to 1919 revealed that printmaking was almost entirely absent from its exhibitions, which consisted mainly of oil paintings, watercolours and fine art photography. The lack of printmaking activity could largely be attributed to the scarcity of fine art printmaking training available in the region. Although Robert Hawcridge, Director of the Dunedin School of Art, was a noted lithographer and book-illustrator,¹¹⁴ the vocationally-orientated syllabus allowed little time for creative printmaking.¹¹⁵ Enrolments at the school diminished during World War One and when Hawcridge died in 1919, art classes were suspended indefinitely.

The only other printmakers known to be working in Dunedin during this period were Dorothy Jenkin and Mabel Hill.¹¹⁶ Dorothy Jenkin was a member of the Otago Art Society but nothing is known about her training, and she is not represented in public collections. The only traced example of her work was a conservative landscape entitled *Birches*, (etching), 1914, (Fig. 5), which appeared in *Art In New Zealand* in June 1929. Mabel Hill was a professionally trained artist but her influence on Dunedin printmaking was mainly as a teacher and council member of the Otago Art Society. She enrolled at

¹¹⁴ King Edward Technical College, *Jubilee Booklet Commemorating 30 Years of Day Classes 1909-1939, 50 Years of Evening Classes 1889-1939, and 70 Years of Art Classes, 1869-1939*, Dunedin: The College, 1939, p. 12. Hocken Library Archives.

¹¹⁵ King Edward Technical College, *Report and Prospectus for 1915-1916 of the King Edward Technical College*, Dunedin: Alex Sligo, 1916, p.73. Hocken Library Archives.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Gulliver, "Graphic Art in New Zealand. An Historical Note (1888-1920)", Auckland City Council Library Committee, *Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Prints Representative of Graphic Art in New Zealand*, Auckland: City Art Gallery, 1930, p. 6.

the Wellington School of Design in 1886, and after studying under James Nairn and gaining distinction in her South Kensington exams, went on to teach at the School.¹¹⁷ She married Dunedin printer John McIndoe, and after his death in 1916 she established the Barn Studio, a small private art school, in association with A.H. O'Keefe.¹¹⁸ While best known for her portraits and flower paintings, Hill also created etchings and designed bookplates.¹¹⁹ One of her few known prints was *The River*, 1923, (Fig. 6), a traditionally executed etching of a boat lying on a riverbank.



Fig. 5. Dorothy Jenkin, *Birches*, (etching), 1914



Fig. 6. Mabel Hill, *The River*, (etching), 1923

¹¹⁷ E. Mason & Jane Vial, "Mabel Hill 1972-1956", *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, Vol 11, 1990, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ Rosemary Entwisle, "Hill, Mabel 1872-1956". *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹¹⁹ E. Mason & Jane Vial, p. 26.

Creative printmaking did not really begin to flourish in Dunedin until the arrival of British art teachers Frederick Ellis, Tom Jenkins, Robert Donn, William Allen and Robert Nettleton Field in the early 1920s. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, within a decade they had succeeded in establishing a thriving printmaking community in the city.

1.5 Conclusion

From inauspicious beginnings in 1900, New Zealand printmaking had by 1919 begun to transform itself from a trade practice to a creative art. Though traditionally executed monochromatic etchings of British and European subject matter still persisted, printmakers were increasingly focussing their attention on contemporary New Zealand subject matter, and had begun exploiting the creative potential of colour lithography, linocutting and wood-engraving. Art societies were still reluctant to include prints in exhibitions but some artists had grown confident enough to stage their own exhibitions. Quoin Club printmakers were responsible for many of these initiatives, and their prints provided evidence of the emergence of a school of New Zealand printmaking.

A change in art education policy at this juncture provided fine art printmaking with a further boost. William Sanderson La Trobe became National Superintendent of Technical Education in 1919, and anxious to improve the quality of art education and to stem the flow of artists overseas, he set up a scheme to recruit professionally qualified art teachers from Britain.¹²⁰ Collectively known as La Trobe teachers, the artists he selected were primarily responsible for teaching painting and drawing in art schools but were also expected to teach ‘applied arts’, giving printmakers unprecedented access to training. The timing of their arrival was also fortuitous, for the unexpected collapse of the Quoin Club in the 1920s left the print without a champion. La Trobe teachers assumed responsibility for promoting the print as a fine art but took New Zealand printmaking in quite a different direction from their Quoin Club predecessors.

¹²⁰ Gordon Brown & Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting, 1939-1980*, London, Auckland: Collins, 1982, p. 100.

CHAPTER TWO

THE 1920s: THE REGIONALIST PRINT

“Ao-te-a-roa, the Long White Cloud, our country, less poetically named New Zealand, remains an enigma to us. We do not know her colour or her character. Who will rise up and show us these?”¹

The pressure on artists to create an art of national identity intensified as the 1920s progressed. Pointing to the example set by Australian artists, critics such as E. Chapman Taylor began urging artists here to take up the challenge.² Regionalist imagery formed the foundation of New Zealand’s art of national identity, and printmakers responded by creating scenes of city and working life, landscapes, indigenous flora and fauna and historical Māori subjects. Each distinct in their own right, they were inextricably linked together by a common objective, one so pervasive that few prints of any other type appeared. After the Quoin Club went into decline in the early 1920s, La Trobe teachers recruited from Britain assumed responsibility for promoting regionalist printmaking but redefined its focus by encouraging the creation of prints of unspoiled landscapes and archetypal rural figures in preference to urban and industrial imagery. La Trobe teachers also introduced students to their first taste of Post-Impressionism, resulting in regionalist printmakers showing more interest in the formal qualities of their prints and less concern for representation. La Trobe teachers were wary of more contemporary avant-garde art, and student printmakers learnt about Cubism, Futurism and Abstraction through artists employed in the advertising sector rather than the fine arts. This intensified their interest in experimenting with simplified and flattened form and led to them adopting a decorative style of abstraction.

Increasing demand for improved design resulted in printmakers accepting commissions for bookplates, book illustrations and printed textiles, and regionalist imagery also pervaded these areas of printmaking.

¹ E. Chapman Taylor, “Art In New Zealand”, *The Ladies' Mirror*, 1 February 1924, p. 16. Alexander Turnbull Library.

² Ibid.

2.1 End of Quoin Club Regionalism

Membership of the Quoin Club quadrupled in the early 1920s, and initially it looked likely to continue to lead the development of regionalist printmaking. Constant changes in membership, however, were undermining the stability, morale and direction of the Club. After Club exhibitions staged in 1920 and 1921, new members were recruited to replace those who had left to take up employment elsewhere. Particularly destabilising was the loss of four founding members: Bagnall had followed Warner's example and left to work in Australia,³ King had relocated to Wellington and Fitzgerald to Christchurch. The policy the Quoin Club adopted in 1920 of not allowing members to hold solo exhibitions may also have prompted the resignations of others.⁴

The Quoin Club held what turned out to be its final exhibition in May 1922 and released its second portfolio during the exhibition. This contained only four prints: Arnold Goodwin's etching, *Pohutukawas, Castor Oil Bay*, 1922, Thomas Gulliver's etching, *Foley's Barn*, c.1920, and woodcut, *The Bridge*, 1922, and David Payne's linocut, *Pastoral*, 1922.⁵ It was evident that much of the creativity and boldness of previous years had dissipated; the second portfolio lacked the rich colouration and simplified form that had characterised their earlier prints of city life. Goodwin's etching, *Pohutukawas, Castor Oil Bay*, 1922, (Plate 17), for example was a delicately etched landscape which focussed on indigenous trees, but it lacked the vigour of his previous etchings of Auckland docks. Similarly, Gulliver's etching, *Foley's Barn*, 1920, was technically proficient but dull, and his woodcut, *The Bridge*, was a reworking of an earlier linocut. Payne's *Pastoral*, was a rather mundane linocut of a female nude.

While the artistic force of the Quoin Club appeared spent, Gulliver's individual reputation as a printmaker was gaining momentum. Seven of his prints were featured in a landmark exhibition of prints held at the Tyrell Gallery, Sydney, in 1923. Described

³ Arnold Goodwin, "New Zealand in Australian Art", *The Ladies' Mirror*, 1 October 1923, p. 20. Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁴ "Quoin Club Minutes, 27 July 1920", NZ MS 42, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

⁵ It also contained two photographs, Albert Hooper's, *The Clouds*, and David Payne's [*Nude*].

as “the first definitive exhibition of wood-cuts that has been held in the Commonwealth” it also included prints by Margaret Preston, Lionel Lindsay and Napier Waller.⁶ Among Gulliver's contributions were *Reflections, (The Wharf)*, (linocut), 1922, (Plate 18), which presented an Auckland wharf in the manner of a Japanese woodcut; and *Shortland Street, (Freeman's Bay)*, (woodcut), 1920, (Plate 19), a bold regionalist print where an inner-city Auckland suburb was reduced to geometric pattern.⁷ The quality of Gulliver's prints was such that the prices of some were on a par with those by Lionel Lindsay, and the exhibition catalogue provided an insight into how Australians viewed his art

T. V. Gulliver's sincere work has the serious attitude that in Australia we have come to associate with the mind of New Zealand. Somewhat sombre in out-look, the choice examples of his wood engraving in this exhibition show a feeling for colour vigorously expressed.⁸

The journal *Art In Australia* included *Shortland Street, (Freeman's Bay)* in its August 1923 issue, but back in New Zealand, *The Triad*, still reluctant to accept anything other than traditional etchings as fine art, failed to mention Gulliver's achievements. Adding to Gulliver's troubles was the fact that his leadership of the Quoin Club was now under threat. Although the Quoin Club was still attracting new members, the minutes of its meetings indicated it was beset by internal wrangling. What had begun as a small, close-knit group of like-minded friends intent on creating regionalist imagery was now a club with 30 full members and 20 associate members, without a common agenda.⁹ In February 1925, William Gummer persuaded members

⁶ A. G. Stephens, *Woodcuts*, Exhibition Catalogue, Tyrells' Ltd, Sydney, 1923, p. 23. Art Gallery of New South Wales Archives.

⁷ Shortages of expensive, imported boxwood led to Gulliver cutting *Shortland Street* on the reverse side of a block he had previously used to engrave *The Pontoon*. The block was composed of six small wooden off cuts held together by metal pins, with both sides cut so that the separate blocks were not visible in the finished prints. I am grateful to Jane Davidson, Curator, Auckland Art Gallery, for bringing this to my attention.

⁸ Gulliver's woodcuts cost 17/6d, as did several of Lionel Lindsay's prints. Stephens, p. 26.

⁹ In 1917 the small group of foundation members knew each other sufficiently well to create a club-book of caricatures lampooning each other's foibles. This would have been impossible in 1925 when the Club was much larger.

that the affairs of the Club should be wound up,¹⁰ but a month later, Gulliver and Goodwin successfully re-established the Club. They then made two strategic errors which ultimately led to the Club's final collapse. The first was deciding to move to larger premises in Vulcan Lane when their old clubrooms were threatened with demolition. Goodwin recalled that the move to larger premises “allowed for the acquisition of more gear and equipment, and also, unfortunately at an increased expense and the introduction of dilettante members mainly interested in the Club's social life”.¹¹

The second error Gulliver and Goodwin made was underestimating the strength of opposition to their plan to offer membership to women, a conflict which led to the exclusion of several promising regionalist printmakers. Both men were supportive of women's rights, Goodwin had established *The Ladies' Mirror* in 1922 to provide women with a public platform from which to lobby for more political and social equality, and Gulliver was a frequent contributor to the journal.¹² Before they could implement their plan, members Geddes and Reynolds outmanoeuvred them by introducing a resolution restricting membership to men only.¹³ As a result, women regionalist printmakers, including Hilda Wiseman and Connie Lloyd, who were already attending the Club as visitors, were barred from membership at a time when the Club could have greatly benefited from their input. Gulliver and Goodwin were so disenchanted that they turned their energies elsewhere. Gulliver found another outlet for promoting the print; he approached John Barr at the Auckland City Art Gallery and suggested the staging of print exhibitions using works lent by private collectors to supplement the Gallery's small print collection. His suggestion was received with enthusiasm and from this point

¹⁰ “Quoin Club Minutes, 24 February 1925”, NZ MS 42, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

¹¹ Arnold Goodwin, “The Quoin Club”, p. 4. Hand-written notes, Quoin Club File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

¹² Arnold Goodwin, “Editorial Reflections”, *The Ladies' Mirror*, Vol 1 No 1, 1 July 1922, np. Alexander Turnbull Library. In its four-year existence, the journal featured a regular column on New Zealand women artists, and reported on the achievements of women doctors, trade unionists, lawyers, businesswomen and sportswomen.

¹³ “Quoin Club Minutes, 17 March 1925”, NZ MS 42, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

on Gulliver's energy was devoted to curating a series of loan exhibitions.¹⁴ With its leadership otherwise engaged and members unable to agree on objectives, the Quoin Club struggled on in name only until 1930 when its printmaking equipment was transferred to the Auckland Society of Arts, and the remaining property divided among original members. It was a dismal end to a group that had begun life as the first graphic arts club in Australasia.¹⁵ Just as the Quoin Club began to disintegrate, however, a group of British artists arrived who took up the cause of regionalist printmaking.

2.2 La Trobe Regionalist Printmakers

The British art teachers recruited during the 1920s by William Sanderson La Trobe, Superintendent of Technical Education, were tasked with improving the quality of art training in New Zealand art schools.¹⁶ The majority were Royal Academy graduates with a thorough training in the South Kensington system, who shared an Arts and Crafts approach to artmaking and disdained artificial barriers between the fine and applied arts. Given that they had been primarily employed to teach painting, and printmaking formed an insignificant part of their own art practice, they went on to exert considerable influence over New Zealand printmaking for the next twenty-five years. They began by following the precedent set by Harry Linley Richardson at Wellington Technical College and Richard Wallwork at the Canterbury College School of Art, in encouraging students to view their training as an opportunity to learn about fine art printmaking as well as a means of preparing themselves for a future trade. With La Trobe teachers having a common background, delivering the same syllabus and promoting regionalist imagery in art schools throughout the country, the marked variations between printmaking in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin

¹⁴ Goodwin, who was already devoting more time to directing the Carlton Advertising Studio, became increasingly preoccupied with drama production. Ian Thwaites, *In Another Dimension: Auckland Bookplates 1920-1960*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2002, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵ David Angeloro, *Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Painter-Etchers 1800-1940*, Australian Visual Arts Database, Documentation Pty Ltd, Discovery Media and David Angeloro, 1995, CD-Rom.

¹⁶ Gordon Brown & Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1939-1980*, Auckland: Collins, 1982, p. 100.

referred to in Chapter One slowly began to disappear.¹⁷

In contrast to their Quoin Club predecessors, several La Trobe teachers had experienced the horrors of mechanized warfare during World War One. For example, Francis Shurrock had been gassed during military action and interred as a prisoner of war;¹⁸ and Frederick Vincent Ellis had also suffered as a result of gassing during trench warfare.¹⁹ Like many artists of their generation, this experience caused them to reject urban subject matter and avant-garde art, and seek solace in the unspoiled landscape.²⁰ Indeed, the rediscovery of national identity through the landscape and archetypal rural figures had become a major preoccupation of British artists,²¹ but “Paradoxically, a return to traditional subject matter was accompanied by the ascendancy of formalist theory”.²² Rather than rejecting modern art outright, they adopted a decorative version of Post-Impressionism characterized by an interest in pattern and design, and simplified and flattened form. However, even this moderated style of Post-Impressionism was considered radical by the New Zealand art establishment when it was introduced by La Trobe teachers. Art critic W. Page Rowe was typical in his denouncement of modern art as unintelligible, its practitioners at best misled, and at worst, mentally unsound.²³ The introduction of Post-Impressionism and the emphasis La Trobe teachers placed on unspoiled landscapes led regionalist printmaking in a completely different direction from that set by the Quoin Club a decade earlier. The formal qualities of a print began to take precedence over literal representation and landscapes gradually replaced images of urban life and working life. Although they shared a common cultural agenda, each La Trobe teacher adopted a different approach to regionalist printmaking.

¹⁷ See Chapter One, sections 1.1 to 1.4. for details.

¹⁸ Mark Stocker, *Francis Shurrock, Shaping New Zealand Sculpture*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000, p. 25.

¹⁹ “Gassing Prompts Migration”, *The Dominion*, 29 September 1980, np, (preview of F.V. Ellis Retrospective, 1981). Artist’s File, Christchurch Art Gallery Library.

²⁰ Frances Spalding, *British Art Since 1900*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1992, pp. 61-64.

²¹ Ysanne Holt, *British Artists and the Modernist Landscape*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, p. 4

²² Frances Spalding, p. 61.

²³ W. Page Rowe, “Modern Revolutionary Art: It’s Origin and Intention”, *The New Nation*, 6 December 1924, pp. 32-33.

Roland Hipkins, a graduate of the Royal College of Art, was appointed Director of the newly opened Napier School of Art in 1922. Hipkins was welcomed into the Napier art community, elected President of the Napier Society of Arts and Crafts and taught at the Napier School of Art until 1929.²⁴ Hipkins had a room at the Napier School of Art equipped for teaching woodcutting, etching, linocutting, lithography and the hand printing of textiles.²⁵ He had the distinct advantage of arriving in a city without a firmly entrenched conservative art society, and was one of the few La Trobe teachers able to introduce Post-Impressionist concepts without any difficulty.²⁶ He encouraged Napier artists to consider using the colour woodcut to depict the local landscape, and to adopt an interest in a decorative form of Post-Impressionism, resulting in Leo Bestall creating a memorable series of regionalist woodcuts.²⁷

In contrast, regionalist printmaking was slow to develop at the Dunedin School of Art, which had been in a state of decline since the death of its Director Robert Hawcridge in 1919, when it had been downgraded to a department within the King Edward Technical School.²⁸ In 1922, La Trobe recruited Frederick Ellis and Tom Jenkin from the Royal College of Art to revitalise the Art School, and within months of their arrival they were petitioning the Board of the School to purchase an etching press.²⁹ Ellis and Jenkin, however, had little impact on printmaking at the School, they resented being closely supervised by the School's managers, and by 1925 both had resigned.³⁰

²⁴ Roxanne Fea, "The Woodcut Prints of Leo Bestall", *Modern New Zealand*, March 1996, No 5, pp. 24-25.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The Art Department was subsequently upgraded to an art school in its own right again in 1937. Rosemary Entwisle, *The Dunedin School of Art and the La Trobe Scheme*, Dunedin: Hocken Library, 1989, pp. 8-14. For the sake of clarity, it has been referred to as the Dunedin School of Art throughout this thesis.

²⁹ King Edward Technical School, "Board of Managers Minutes, 21 June 1922", p. 364. Hocken Library Archives, AG 763, University of Otago.

³⁰ Rosemary Entwisle, pp. 8-10.

During this period, Otago printmakers still had access to training through Robert Donn, who had been appointed Senior Art Lecturer at the Dunedin Teachers College in 1922.³¹

Ellis and Jenkin were replaced at the Dunedin School of Art in 1925 by Royal College of Art graduates R.N. Field and W.H. Allen. They too found it badly equipped and were more than a little shocked to find they were teaching a handful of schoolchildren rather than adults.³² Allen was employed as a drawing master while Field, who had been a fellow student of Henry Moore, taught sculpture. Both men also taught linocutting, etching, engraving and poster design.³³ They introduced their students to Post-Impressionism, but faced an uphill struggle in Dunedin where “Experimentation was misunderstood as a lack of skill, and, what is more, associated with moral degeneration”.³⁴ Field's favourite printmaking medium was the linocut and his own regionalist prints displayed a decorative simplicity, while Allen was a more conservative printmaker who favoured etching. The most promising regionalist printmakers taught by Donn, Field and Allen during this period were Stewart Bell MacLennan, Alexander McLintock and Harry Vye Miller.

In Auckland, Archie Fisher was appointed Director of the Elam School of Art in 1924. A graduate of the Birmingham School of Art and the Royal College of Art, he promoted a planar style of draughtsmanship and placed life drawing and study of Renaissance and Baroque artists at the core of the curriculum.³⁵ Fisher's insistence that his etching students receive a sound training in draughtsmanship met with the approval of the Quoin Club, which had previously written to the Minister of Education to

³¹ Donn had trained at the Dundee and Glasgow Schools of Art, and was familiar with both intaglio printmaking and the Japanese woodblock tradition. David Bell, “Art in Education, An Essay Celebrating One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Art Education at the Dunedin College of Education”, *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, Special Series No 5, 2000, p. 14.

³² Rosemary Entwisle, p. 10.

³³ King Edward Technical High School, *Art Department Prospectus*, 1926-1932. Hocken Library Archives, AG 763, University of Otago.

³⁴ Anna Petersen & Paula Wagemaker, *R.N. Field: The Dunedin Years, 1925-1945*, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 1989, p. 41.

³⁵ Gordon Brown & Hamish Keith, p. 102.

complain about his predecessor Edward Payton and his teaching methods at Elam.³⁶ It was noticeable that students Fisher taught, including James Boswell, May Smith and Lois White, developed a printmaking style which focussed on human drama as much as the landscape. Boswell recalled “Even if he didn't have a great knowledge or sympathy for modern painting he had acquired a great respect for Renaissance drawing when working with Leon Underwood in London. He passed it on to us and it either became a springboard or a ball and chain for the students.”³⁷

In Christchurch, Francis Shurrock, a sculptor and graduate of the Royal College of Art, was recruited to teach modelling and craft at the Canterbury College School of Art in 1924.³⁸ Shurrock believed that art must have a social purpose if it was to have any relevance to society, and argued for the complete integration of crafts with the fine arts.³⁹ This was completely at odds with the art establishment's stance that art should rise above everyday concerns, and its rigid adherence to the hierarchy of art.⁴⁰ Shurrock introduced his students to linocutting, a print medium rarely practised by Canterbury printmakers before his arrival, and gave them access to his personal collection of Japanese colour woodcuts. His regionalist landscapes displayed the decorative simplicity and flattened form associated with Japanese woodcuts.

A more linear simplicity was favoured by Christopher Perkins who arrived to teach at Wellington Technical College in 1929. A Slade School graduate, Perkins had studied alongside Stanley Spencer and William Roberts, and exhibited with Walter Sickert, Paul Nash and John Nash.⁴¹ Perkins held an exhibition of his linocuts in

³⁶ “Quoin Club Minutes, 18 May 1920”, NZ MS 42, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

³⁷ James Boswell quoted in H. Roth, “James Boswell, A New Zealand Artist in London”, *Auckland City Art Gallery Quarterly*, No 65, December 1977, p. 3

³⁸ Mark Stocker, *Francis Shurrock: Shaping New Zealand Sculpture*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000, p. 26.

³⁹ Francis Shurrock, “Art Must be An Expression of Life”, *N Z. Radio Record*, 15 June 1934, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Smart, “Art and Social Comment in New Zealand, 1930-1982”, M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1982, p. 13:52.

⁴¹ Christopher Perkins, “The Story of Christopher Perkins”, *Art In Australia*, Third Series No

London in 1921, and several works were purchased by the Contemporary Art Society and the British Museum.⁴² However at Wellington Technical College he confined himself to teaching etching.⁴³ Perkins immediately expressed a desire to participate in the creation of a New Zealand art of national identity, which he believed was emerging “because a different environment was resulting in changed habits of thought. Isolation in the expanse of the southern sea was resulting in a special set of characteristics and ideals, which were waiting to be given concrete form by artists of various kinds”.⁴⁴ His influence on regionalist printmaking became more apparent during the 1930s when he began creating a series of prints of contemporary Māori life.

While La Trobe teachers gave students unprecedented access to training in fine art printmaking and introduced them to Post-Impressionism, they did their best to shield them from more avant-garde art. Shurrock, for example, felt impelled “to inoculate New Zealand from the Picasso virus”.⁴⁵ Most also did their best to dissuade students from taking an interest in commercial art or adopting commercial printing techniques. Fisher’s antagonism towards advertising art was legendary, and he discouraged his students from seeking employment in the commercial sector.⁴⁶ Ironically, commercial artists, rather than La Trobe teachers, played a pivotal role in introducing regionalist printmakers to modern art.

2.3 Impact of Advertising Art on Regionalist Printmaking

Advertising art accentuated the influence of the Post-Impressionism introduced by La Trobe teachers, by encouraging student printmakers to show more interest in

48, February 1933, p. 32.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Wellington Technical College, *Art School Prospectus*, 1930, np. Wellington High School Library.

⁴⁴ Christopher Perkins quoted in “Expression In Art. An Instructor's Views. Scope For New Zealand”, *The Evening Post*, March 1929, date and page unspecified. Artist’s File, Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁴⁵ Francis Shurrock quoted in M. Stocker, *ibid*, p. 51.

⁴⁶ John Daly-Peoples, *Elam, 1890-1990*, Auckland: Elam School of Fine Arts, 1990, np.

simplified and flattened form, and less concern for representational art. A major difference between La Trobe art teachers and artists working in the advertising sector, however, was that commercial artists had to be aware of the very latest developments in international graphic art in order to remain employed. In addition, they had to give their artwork a distinctive New Zealand flavour, demands which combined to transform them into modern regionalists. This particularly applied to artists working for agencies like Charles Haines, Goldbergs, Chandler & Co, Ilott's, and the Tourist and Publicity Department who faced stiff competition in the USA and Europe.⁴⁷ As Arnold Goodwin, printmaker and Director of the Carlton Studio observed "We are ever in the position of having to provide a new excitement.... What was new last year is now a mummified corpse".⁴⁸ Commercial artists kept up to date with international developments through membership of advertising clubs, and also subscribed to trade journals such as *Commercial Art*.⁴⁹

Commercial artists at the New Zealand Railways Studio were among the first in the country to begin experimenting with modern art, they "carried the spirit of modernity into the cultural mainstream in New Zealand... well before McCahon and Woollaston began their experiments with abstraction".⁵⁰ However, the Modernism promoted by the New Zealand Railways Studios was *deliberately* decorative rather than rigorously avant-garde. Stanley Davis, the Studio's Supervising Artist, realised the New Zealand public was deeply suspicious of Modernism. Citing current criticism of Jacob Epstein's work in the local press, he cautioned "The business man knows his public, and knows further that until a different and more sympathetic attitude is adopted by the

⁴⁷ A. H. Messenger, "Advertising New Zealand", *New Zealand Advertising Exhibition Handbook*, Auckland: The Auckland Advertising Club, 1927, p. 11. Auckland Advertising Club Papers, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

⁴⁸ Arnold Goodwin, "Advertisement Design", *New Zealand Advertising Exhibition Handbook*, *ibid*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Goodwin, for example, was on the executive of the Auckland Advertising Club which affiliated itself with advertising clubs in the USA and Australia, and organised the *New Zealand Advertising Exhibition* in Auckland in 1927, to introduce members to recent innovations in advertising art. Auckland Advertising Club Papers, Item 67-15447, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

⁵⁰ Linda Tyler, "Take the Train: Man and Machine in Posters from the New Zealand Railways Publicity Branch in the 1920s and 1930s", *Modern New Zealand*, March 1996, No 5, p. 30.

public towards Art, he must continue to attract their attention along established lines”.⁵¹ Rather than adopting Cubism, Abstraction or Futurism in their entirety, commercial artists blended elements from each to create an Art Deco style which the public found more acceptable. Typically, they employed flattened and simplified form and minimal background to focus attention on the product; off-centre and asymmetrical compositions to create a sense of movement; and elongation of the figure to create a sense of ‘expressive distortion’.⁵² These elements were apparent in a cigarette advertisement, designed by printmaker Gilbert Meadows for Ilott’s Studio, (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Gilbert Meadows, *Cigarette Advertisement*, Ilott’s Studio, Wellington, c.1925
Ron Meadows Collection

The movement of artists between the advertising sector and art schools led to this style infiltrating regionalist printmaking. For example, Harry Linley Richardson at Wellington Technical College regularly undertook commercial commissions; and former La Trobe teacher Frederick Ellis, now a commercial artist at the New Zealand Railways Advertising Studios, taught part-time at Wellington Technical College.⁵³ Even

⁵¹ Stanley Davis, “Poster Originality”, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 1 May 1926, p. 34. Te Papa Tongarewa Library.

⁵² Michele Bogart, *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 139.

⁵³ Frederick Ellis was as qualified as Archie Fisher, having graduated from the Royal College of Art, “where he was awarded the Travelling Scholarship for the Design School — the highest prize a student can get”. Robert Anning Bell, Professor of Design, Royal College of Art, South Kensington, Letter of Reference for F.V. Ellis, c.1921. Artist’s file, Christchurch

the rather conservative Richard Wallwork of the Canterbury School of Art undertook commercial work, receiving a major commission in 1927 to design posters for the Empire Marketing Board.⁵⁴ The flow of ideas from the commercial art sector to the fine arts accelerated during the 1920s, as advertising studios grew to become the largest employers of artists in New Zealand.⁵⁵ Poster hoardings that adorned city streets were also a pervasive influence. In the absence of television and with commercial radio in its infancy, advertisers placed hoardings on every available vantage point and covered them with posters to the extent that they become a ubiquitous part of the urban landscape.⁵⁶ Students at Elam School of Art paid close attention to posters and advertising material they saw around the city, and critiqued them attentively;⁵⁷ and it is likely that art students in other centres also did so.

The invigorating impact that advertising art was having on the fine arts was not confined to New Zealand but was part of an international trend noted by Roger Fry. During a lecture he gave at the opening of a poster exhibition in Oxford, England he commented “there is as yet no Royal Academy of Poster Designers, there is no fixed and traditional notion of the kind of thing a poster ought to be... the art of poster design holds out opportunities of a kind that are all too rare in modern life”.⁵⁸

Art Gallery Library.

⁵⁴ Neil Roberts, *Richard & Elizabeth Wallwork*, Canterbury Vignettes, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 2000, p. 20.

⁵⁵ Evidence of the phenomenal growth of the advertising industry was offered by the New Zealand Railways Advertising Studios, which had a staff of ten in 1920 but by 1926 had expanded to a staff of seventy-four, and premises in Wellington which occupied an acre of land. “Growth of the Railways Advertising Branch”, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 24 August 1926, p. 29. The owners of several advertising studios were very supportive of the print as a fine art; John Ilott, Director of Ilott Advertising, had the largest print collection in the country, while print connoisseur Maurice Hurst was a director of Charles Haines Advertising Agency Ltd.

⁵⁶ So many hoardings were installed that Auckland City Council banned them from residential streets, while Dunedin City Council considered banishing them entirely. “Advertising Hoardings - New Restrictions in City”, *The New Zealand Herald*, 1 July 1921, p. 6.

⁵⁷ Vida Vickers, “Commercial Art in Theory and Practice”, *The Palette*, Magazine of the Auckland School of Art, Vol 1, No 2, October 1930, p. 25. Elam Archive, Fine Arts Library, University of Auckland.

⁵⁸ Roger Fry, *Art and Commerce*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1926, pp. 22-23.

Nowhere was the influence of advertising art more apparent than in the regionalist prints created by artists intent on building an art of national identity. Conversely, the indiscriminate use of commercial techniques by artists lacking creative rigour did little to enhance the status of the printmaking as a fine art.

2.4 Regionalist Prints

Regionalist imagery continued to feature scenes of city and working life, landscapes, indigenous flora and fauna, and historical Māori subjects. A distinct change of emphasis occurred in the late 1920s, however, when the unspoiled landscape began to take precedence over all other regionalist imagery. As previously discussed, to a great extent this could be attributed to the arrival of La Trobe teachers who championed the landscape as the foundation of New Zealand's art of national identity. The collapse of the Quoin Club also led to a noticeable decline of prints of city and industrial life.

2.4.1 City & Working Life

Prints of city and working life created by emerging printmakers of the 1920s tended to be much more modern in execution than those of their tutors. For example, W. E. Rice's *Hotel Cecil*, (etching), c.1929, (Plate 20), gave a glimpse of the entrance foyer of a bar frequented by Wellington artists and writers. The architecture of the hotel and its rain-soaked entrance were suggested by short rapid strokes while pedestrians appeared as matchstick-like figures in a style previously unknown in New Zealand art. When this print was exhibited in the *Loan Exhibition of Prints Representative of the Graphic Arts in New Zealand* at the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1930, *The Auckland Star* described it as a “good etching of unusual effect”.⁵⁹ It is likely that Rice had trained under Harry Linley Richardson at Wellington Technical College. He worked as a commercial artist at the Government Printing Department in Wellington, and was an artist-member of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts.

⁵⁹ “Graphic Arts. New Zealand Prints. Loan Collection Exhibited”, *The Auckland Star*, 5 August 1930, p. 3. Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

Also a departure from convention was Connie Lloyd's etching-aquatint, *Evening*, 1929, (Plate 21), which presented a silhouette of the Auckland city skyline. Lloyd used short vertical strokes to denote the city, creating the illusion that it was arising straight out of the land. It was one of her more innovative prints as her father Trevor Lloyd actively discouraged her interest in modern art. His grandson recalled "Trevor instilled in his daughters a dislike of the modernist styles", and described him as a "Victorian father who had dominated his daughters' lives with his love to the extent that they never married and lived out their many years after his death in his shadow, neglecting their own artistic talents."⁶⁰ Connie and her sister Olive Lloyd had studied photography under Edward Payton at the Elam School of Art from 1915 to 1919,⁶¹ and had taken private etching lessons with him as printmaking was not formally part of the curriculum.

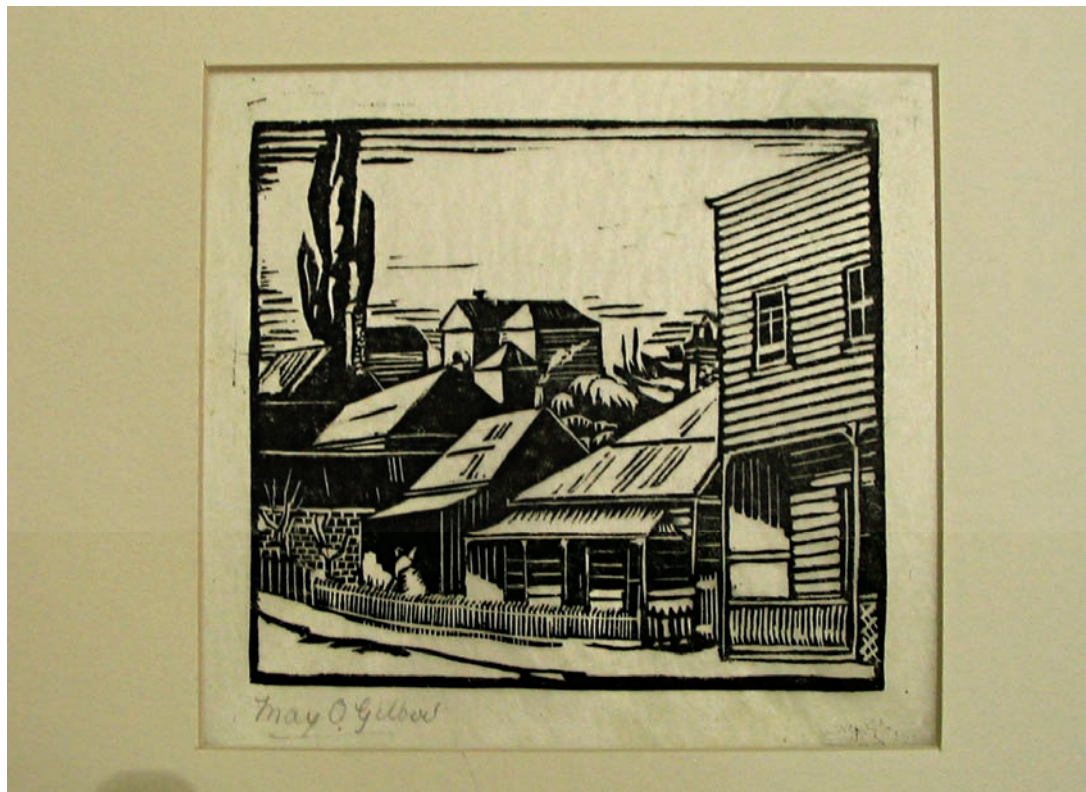


Fig. 8. May Gilbert, [*Auckland Houses*], (linocut), c.1929
Courtesy of Newton Andrews

Although Archie Fisher, Payton's successor at the Elam School of Art, may have insisted on students acquiring sound skills in draughtsmanship, he granted them

⁶⁰ Trevor Lloyd Jnr, "Icons of the Bush: the Etchings of Trevor Lloyd", pp. 14, 38, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 33.

freedom to experiment, and increasingly their prints showed more concern for design than literal representation. For example, May Gilbert's linocut, [*Auckland Houses*], c.1929, (Fig. 8), emphasised the patterns formed by the weatherboards, fences and corrugated iron roofs of an inner-city Auckland street. Likewise, Ruth Coyle (Innes) avoided using tonal modelling to depict human form in her linocut, *Roadmenders*, c.1926, (Fig. 9), reducing the workers to a pattern of Art Deco silhouettes.⁶²

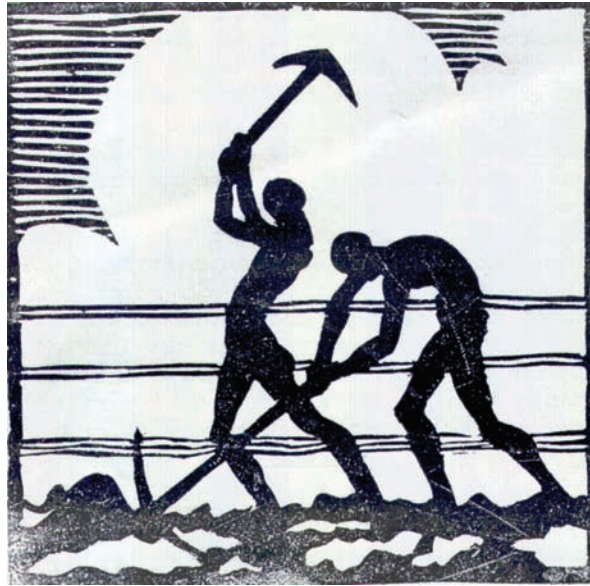


Fig. 9. Ruth Coyle, *Roadmenders*, (linocut), c.1926

In some cases students had obvious difficulties reconciling their interest in modern art with the conservatism of their art school tutors. For example, Ronald McKenzie's etching, [*Waka Bucket Dredge, Lyttleton*], c.1920, (Plate 22), included figures of stevedores which resembled Henry Moore sculptures in their mass and predated a similar approach to the human figure seen in leading British printmaker, Agnes Miller Parker's wood-engraving, *Stevedores*, 1926. The modernity of McKenzie's stevedores however, clashed uncomfortably with the very traditionally executed ships in the background. Clearly McKenzie found it hard to follow his own interests while meeting the expectations of Archibald Nicoll, his Canterbury School of Art tutor. Nicoll's conservative influence was also apparent in a series of architectural

⁶² Gilbert and Coyle later became members of the Rutland Group, formed in 1935 by Elam graduates united by a common interest in modern art. Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *We Learnt To See. Elam's Rutland Group 1935-1958*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2004, pp. 107-108.

etchings McKenzie created of the University, including [*Inner Quadrangle and Cloisters, Old University, Christchurch New Zealand*], c.1924, (Plate 23). Executed in an antiquated style, they depicted the University as if it were a medieval institution.

While students were experimenting with Post-Impressionism in their regionalist prints, or at least attempting to do so, more established printmakers rarely ventured beyond an Edwardian realism, even when they were focussing on contemporary urban subjects. For example, Harry Linley Richardson's drypoint *The Picture Theatre*, c.1928, (Plate 24), featured filmgoers arriving at a Wellington cinema at night; and although his fascination with recently introduced electric lighting was evident in his attempt to capture the brightly lit foyer, the drypoint itself was quite conservatively executed.⁶³ Similarly, Frederick Ellis's drypoint *The Maori, 7.40 pm, Wellington, N.Z.*, 1927, (Plate 25), showed passengers disembarking from a steamship ferry but was Whistler-like in its execution. After resigning from Dunedin School of Art in 1925, Ellis relocated to Wellington where he worked as a commercial artist at the New Zealand Railways Advertising Studios. He began teaching part-time at the Wellington Technical School in 1927, becoming Head of the Art Department in 1939.⁶⁴ Like Richardson, Ellis may have been a conservative etcher, but he too ensured that students were aware of the latest developments in contemporary advertising art. He encouraged them to experiment across a wide range of print media including aquatints, mezzotints, and lithography, wood-engraving and colour printing.⁶⁵

Arthur Hipwell's impression of the Christchurch's inner-city business district, *The Bank of N.Z. Corner ChCh*, (etching), 1923, (Plate 26), also showed a debt to Whistler in the sketchiness of its style. The silhouettes of office workers hurrying across the road were reflected in the rain-soaked street, as were the outlines of surrounding buildings. Hipwell had studied at both the Elam School of Art and Canterbury College

⁶³ Jane Vial, *H. Linley Richardson 1878-1947*, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 1986, p. 21

⁶⁴ *Catalogue of the First Retrospective Exhibition of the Works of F.V.Ellis, A.R.C.A.*, Petone: Petone Settlers' Museum, October 1980, np. Artist's File, Christchurch Art Gallery Library.

⁶⁵ Future printmakers he taught during this period included George Woods and John Holmwood.

School of Art before being appointed Arts Editor of the Christchurch Press in 1924.⁶⁶ He commissioned printmakers like Gladys Anderson to illustrate for the newspaper, and after returning to Auckland in 1929, continued mentoring printmakers, including E. Mervyn Taylor and Adele Younghusband. As an active member of the Auckland Society of Arts he also took every opportunity to promote the print as a fine art. Prints of city life by John Mills Thomasson, who taught at Christchurch Technical College, were also Edwardian in style. His etching, *Clock Tower, Christchurch*, c.1924, (Plate 27), for example, presented the landmark surrounded by cars and pedestrians at a city intersection, but was conservatively executed despite the contemporaneity of its subject matter. Like Richard Wallwork of the Canterbury School of Art, Thomasson had trained at the Manchester Municipal School of Art.⁶⁷ He settled in Christchurch after serving in World War One, and worked as a commercial artist for *The Sun* newspaper.⁶⁸ He began teaching at Christchurch Technical College in 1926, and his lecture notes indicated he offered classes in wood-engraving, lithography, and bookplate design.⁶⁹

The regionalist with the greatest nostalgia for the past was James Fitzgerald. His *Cathedral Square – After Rain*, (colour etching-aquatint), 1925, (Plate 28), for example, featured a horse and cab standing beside the Godley statue, with the lights from the nearby hotels reflected in the rain-soaked surface of the Square. He completely overlooked the fact that electric trams had replaced horse-drawn cabs in the city by 1905.⁷⁰ A founding member of the Quoin Club, Fitzgerald had relocated his lithographic studio to Christchurch in 1923. Unlike his younger Quoin Club colleagues, he always retained a very traditional printmaking style.⁷¹ Fitzgerald specialised in creating

⁶⁶ Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, pp. 145-146.

⁶⁷ Correspondence with Jean Thomasson, the printmaker's niece, 19 May 2005.

⁶⁸ "Retirement of Mr. Thomasson", *Papanui High School Review*, 1959, p. 8. Artist's File, Christchurch Art Gallery Library.

⁶⁹ J. M. Thomasson, "Lecture Notes & Scrapbook", Christchurch Art Gallery Archives.

⁷⁰ Canterbury Branch New Zealand Federation of University Women, *Round the Square: A History of Christchurch's Cathedral Square*, Christchurch, Clerestory Press, 1995. p. 70.

⁷¹ Born in Edinburgh in 1869, Fitzgerald undertook an apprenticeship as a lithographic artist under Henry Fuller of the Worshipful Company of Loriners in London. He migrated to New Zealand in 1903 to become Head of the Art Department of *The New Zealand Herald* and then established his own commercial art business in Auckland, the Medusa Studio which he

architectural etchings of cathedrals, churches and schools, and many of these had the hackneyed appearance of works produced to satisfy the tourist market. The backward-looking nature of his Christchurch prints may also have been affected by the city being the most quintessentially English-looking one in the Dominion. Located in a flat plain devoid of indigenous bush, it was known for its Gothic Revival architecture and English-style botanic gardens; and “came to be imagined as the most English place outside England”.⁷²

La Trobe teachers demonstrated far more interest in simplified form in their printmaking but showed little enthusiasm for prints of city and working life. Scarred by their experiences of World War One, they preferred to seek solace in the unspoiled landscape and scenes of rural labour, and “Behind this desire to get back to nature in its untamed state lay a reaction against the city”.⁷³ Even on the rare occasions when they did create prints of city and working life, their images were invariably rustic in theme. For example, Robert Nettleton Field’s linocut, *The Bell Tower*, 1928, (Plate 29), featured a washing-strewn alleyway in central Dunedin,⁷⁴ but the main focus of attention was the old church bell tower of St Stephen’s Cathedral, giving the impression that the scene was of a small village rather than a bustling city. Similarly, La Trobe teacher Francis Shurrock of the Canterbury College of Art presented sheep farmers in an agricultural saleyard as archetypes of rural prosperity and labour in his linocut *Saleday*, (*Hawarden, N. Canterbury*), 1929, (Plate 30). He achieved this by grouping rows of farmers into a composition not unlike a Roman frieze, elevating local, everyday subject matter to the realms of the classical.

Ill at ease with urban subject matter, La Trobe teachers were united in the conviction that New Zealand’s art of national identity had to be based on the landscape.

relocated to Christchurch in 1923. “Mr James Fitzgerald”, *The Press*, 9 October 1945, np. Artist’s File, Christchurch Art Gallery Library.

⁷² John Cookson, “Pilgrim’s Progress - Image, Identity and Myth in Christchurch”, John Cookson & Graeme Dunstall (eds.), *Southern Capital Christchurch, Towards a City Biography 1850-2000*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000, p. 26.

⁷³ Frances Spalding, p. 70.

⁷⁴ Anna Petersen & P. Wagemaker, *R.N.Field: The Dunedin Years, 1925-1945*, Catalogue of a Touring Exhibition, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 1989, p. 44.

2.4.2 Landscapes

La Trobe teacher Roland Hipkins at the Napier School of Art strenuously encouraged his students to create woodcuts of the Hawke's Bay landscape, and viewed the colour woodcut as being ideally suited for the purpose.⁷⁵ In an article on block prints written for *Art In New Zealand* he stated, "The recent revival of the woodcut has proved that no matter how old a craft may be it is ever new if approached in the spirit of our own time and used to express individual experiences untrammelled by traditional methods".⁷⁶ Amongst his most promising students was Leo Bestall who responded with a series of regionalist prints, including *Whana Whana*, (colour woodcut), c.1927, (Plate 31), which depicted a gorge in the Whana Valley at the foot of the Kaweka Ranges.⁷⁷ Roxanne Fea has aptly described Bestall's woodcuts as "simplified and thoroughly regional icons" created in a style that fused Post-Impressionist flattened and simplified form with the calligraphic simplicity and design associated with Ukiyo-e prints.⁷⁸ A keen collector of Japanese woodcuts, Bestall was not known to have created any prints before the arrival of Hipkins.⁷⁹

Bestall had trained as an architect at Canterbury College School of Art before serving with the New Zealand Medical Corps in France during World War One.⁸⁰ He returned to Napier where he helped establish the Napier School of Art and the Napier Society of Arts & Crafts. Under the leadership of Hipkins as President and Bestall as Treasurer, the Napier Society of Arts & Crafts promoted printmaking by arranging practical demonstrations,⁸¹ and purchasing works by local artists for the Society's print

⁷⁵ Roxanne Fea, p. 26.

⁷⁶ Roland Hipkins, "Block Prints", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol II No 5, September 1929, p. 39.

⁷⁷ J. D. Buchanan, edited by D. R. Simmons, *The Maori History and Place Names of Hawke's Bay*, Auckland: Reed Publishing (NZ) Ltd, 2004, p. 225.

⁷⁸ Roxanne Fea, pp. 25-26.

⁷⁹ Roxanne Fea, p. 26.

⁸⁰ Robert McGregor, 'Bestall, Leonard Delabere 1895-1959'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

⁸¹ *Annual Report of The Napier Society of Arts & Crafts*, Napier: The Society, 1929, np.

collection.⁸² Membership of the Society entitled subscribers to receive an original contemporary print by a local artist annually, a policy which also helped encourage the collection of regionalist prints.⁸³

A more conservatively executed regionalist landscape was provided by John Mills Thomasson's *Ashley Gorge, N.Z.*, (etching), c.1924, (Plate 32), which depicted sheep grazing in a tussock and scrub covered gorge. Thomasson was rare among South Island printmakers in depicting the local landscape as it was, and making no attempt to 'anglicise it', while most of his colleagues preferred to create images which drew parallels between the local landscape and that of Britain. For example, Albert James Rae's *Mt Sefton from Mueller Hut*, (mezzotint), 1928, (Plate 33), was so generic, that without its title it could be mistaken for a British landscape. Rae's traditional printmaking style was all the more surprising considering that the Dunedin School of Art student had studied at the Glasgow School of Art from 1915 to 1917, where experimentation in Cubism and Futurism was rife.⁸⁴

Printmaking was a popular artform among Glasgow School of Art students; Chica Macnab offered classes in wood-engraving, and Rae's fellow students included Chica's brother Iain Macnab and friend Agnes Miller Parker, printmakers destined to play a major role in modern British printmaking.⁸⁵ Parker and Chica McNab formed a printmaking society in 1917 but Rae does not appear to have been a member. Rae disliked what he described as the School's continental style, "I realised that this work had certain weaknesses because of its Leftist influence and I decided to return to

Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁸² Roxanne Fea & Elisabeth Pishief, *Culture of Collecting: 60 Years of the Hawke's Bay Museum*, Napier: Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, 1996, p. 18.

⁸³ Membership Entitlements, *Annual Report of the Napier Society of Arts & Crafts*, Napier: The Society, 1929, np. Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁸⁴ K. Hartley, *Scottish Art Since 1900*, London: Lund Humphries, 1989, p. 12.

⁸⁵ Macnab went on to establish the Grosvenor School of Art in London which led Modernist printmaking in Britain, and Parker became a prominent wood-engraver in the private press movement. Hartley, p. 172.

London".⁸⁶ There he studied at the Slade School with Professor Henry Tonks, who placed great emphasis on the acquisition of skills in drawing.⁸⁷ R.D.J. Collins has suggested that Rae may also have studied at St Martin's School of Art and Goldsmith College during this time, where it is likely that he acquired formal training in etching.⁸⁸ After returning to Timaru in 1922, Rae established himself as one of the South Island's most prolific regionalists, and introduced generations of students to printmaking.⁸⁹

Despite being inspired by local landscape, Alexander McLintock's prints such as *Sentinel, Stewart Island*, (etching), 1925, (Plate 34), could also be mistaken for British or European scenes. David Bell has pointed out that McLintock was very influenced by European models, and compositional and stylistic similarities existed between his prints and those of early seventeenth-century Dutch landscape artists, particularly his use of raised viewpoints, his cartographer's eye for topographical detail and use of tonal contrasts to evoke atmospheric effects of clouds and rain.⁹⁰ McLintock had studied printmaking under Robert Donn at the Dunedin College of Education, before undertaking further training at the Dunedin School of Art under R.N. Field and W.H. Allen.⁹¹ Their championing of Post-Impressionism had little impact on his artistic development, but Allen encouraged him to adopt etching.⁹² Unable to obtain an etching press locally, McLintock resorted to building his own press.⁹³ In 1929 he began

⁸⁶ R.D.J. Collins, *Albert James Rae, An Exhibition of Paintings, Prints and Drawings*, Timaru: Aigantighe Art Gallery, 1987, p. 6.

⁸⁷ Joseph Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks*, London: Heinemann, 1939, pp. 172-173.

⁸⁸ R.D.J. Collins, p. 7.

⁸⁹ He taught art at Timaru Boys' High School, where he promoted interest in etching, woodcuts and linocuts, and at Timaru Girls' High School, Timaru Technical School and Craighead Diocesan School, *ibid*.

⁹⁰ David Bell, "Alexander Hare McLintock Printmaker. An Essay and a Catalogue", *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, Special Series No 1, 1994, pp. 8-9.

⁹¹ Francis Shurrock, "A.H. McLintock – Etcher", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XII, No 47, March 1940, p. 167.

⁹² David Bell, pp. 7-8.

⁹³ Francis Shurrock, p. 168.

teaching at Timaru Technical High School alongside printmaker A.J. Rae, and like him, devoted much of his printmaking career to depicting the Otago landscape.

Closely related to interest in the regional landscape was the attention printmakers began placing on indigenous flora and fauna. They were motivated both by a desire to adopt motifs that would contribute towards an iconography of national identity, and concern that the indigenous environment should be recorded because it was in imminent danger of extinction.

2.4.3 Flora & Fauna

There was a significant change in public attitudes towards the environment during this decade, initiated by the publication of Hawke's Bay farmer Herbert Guthrie-Smith's best-selling book, *Tutira*, in 1921. In describing the ecological damage he had caused while transforming an area of indigenous bush into a sheep station, Guthrie-Smith made explicit the link between unfettered development and ecological damage.⁹⁴ He and fellow conservationists also emphasised the relationship between national identity and the indigenous environment, "Protection of scenery, flora and fauna was justified on the grounds of their New Zealandness, while, in parallel, landscape and biota helped to define the values a New Zealander would hold".⁹⁵

Trevor Lloyd was among the first printmakers to bring attention to the destruction of the indigenous landscape. Born in Wade in 1865, Lloyd had spent his early life working on his father's farm and as a gum digger in the Far North, experiences that imbued him with a deep respect for indigenous flora and fauna. Lloyd created intensely detailed etchings of the New Zealand bush, in which he presented cabbage trees, flax, ferns and punga, not as botanical curiosities, but as familiar features of the regional landscape. His detailed Romantic landscapes that harked back to a simpler time were enormously popular with the general public. One of his earliest was entitled *Three*

⁹⁴ David Young, *Our Islands, Ourselves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004, p. 110.

⁹⁵ Paul Star & Lynne Lochhead, "Children of the Burnt Bush. New Zealanders and the Indigenous Remnant, 1880-1930", Eric Pawson & Tom Brooking (eds.), *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 131-132.

Veterans, c.1921, (soft-ground etching), (Plate 35), which depicted three nikau palms with almost a silvery lightness; compositionally, the long, narrow format he adopted helped to emphasise the tall and slender nature of the palms.

Lloyd was aware that these magnificent palms were among the few remnants of an area once covered in indigenous forest.⁹⁶ It has been argued that New Zealand artists did not pay serious attention to the destruction of indigenous forests until the 1930s and 1940s,⁹⁷ however, Lloyd's numerous etchings of dying trees predate such paintings by Christopher Perkins and Eric Lee-Johnson by at least a decade. Lloyd worked as a cartoonist for *The New Zealand Herald* and began his printmaking career in his fifties, after having been taught to etch by his daughters Connie and Olive Lloyd. He created prints of the indigenous bush and landscape until his death in 1937, and a major retrospective exhibition of his prints was held in Auckland in 1938.⁹⁸ The spirit in which Lloyd approached his etchings of the indigenous environment was revealed by the fact that he tied the skulls of kiwis to each side of his etching press as a reminder to himself that "Tane was watching over his work of creating images of the bush...."⁹⁹

John Lysaght Moore was equally as concerned about the indigenous environment, but worked in a more modern idiom. His great-grandparents farmed a property adjoining Tutira, and shared Guthrie-Smith's passion for the indigenous landscape.¹⁰⁰ Moore often accompanied his cousin, botanist Esmond Atkinson, on research trips to make drawings of flora and fauna, which he used as the basis for his woodcuts.¹⁰¹ Moore's dedication to the indigenous environment was such that if he

⁹⁶ John Summers, "NZ Messages From Past", *The Christchurch Star*, 5 October 1977. Artist's File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

⁹⁷ Michael Dunn, "Frozen Flame & Slain Tree, The Dead Tree Theme in New Zealand Art of the Thirties and Forties", *Art New Zealand*, Vol 13, 1979, p. 40.

⁹⁸ "Art Notes Auckland", *Art In New Zealand*, September 1938, p. 45.

⁹⁹ Trevor Lloyd (Jnr), *ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰ "Art Persuades Attention", *The Dominion*, 21 February 1997, np. Artist's File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

¹⁰¹ John L. Moore, (ed.), *Artist and Botanist: the Life and Work of Esmond Atkinson*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1947, p. 31.

found an exotic tree or plant within a setting, he would not include it in his work.¹⁰² As his woodcut *Kiekie*, c.1929, (Plate 36), demonstrated, Moore liked to isolate his subject against a plain background to give it added emphasis. He hand-printed his woodcuts using the Japanese method, creating both monochromatic and delicately coloured prints.¹⁰³ Printing presses and tools were in such short supply that Moore, like McLintock, resorted to designing and building his own press and tools.¹⁰⁴

After serving as a stretcher-bearer in World War One, Moore studied under his cousin the painter Dorothy Kate Richmond, and Harry Linley Richardson at the Wellington Technical College. He completed his training at Goldsmiths College, the London School of Art and at the British Academy in Rome.¹⁰⁵ Moore returned in 1927 and “took up his self-imposed task of recording the unspoilt beauty of the New Zealand bush, flowers and birds”.¹⁰⁶ It is likely that he was aware of Australian printmaker Margaret Preston’s colourful woodblock prints of indigenous flora and fauna.¹⁰⁷ However, Moore would have taken umbrage with Preston’s opinion that “taking native flowers, etc., of any country and twiddling them into unique forms will never give a national decorative art”.¹⁰⁸ Indigenous flora presented as emblems of national identity were to dominate Moore’s printmaking until his death in 1965.

¹⁰² W.H. Guthrie-Smith, *Birds of Tutira*, illustrated with woodcuts by John L. Moore, Whatamongo Bay, N.Z, Cape Catley Ltd, 1990, p. 9.

¹⁰³ Helen Hitchings, “Information about Some of the Artists included in An Exhibition of Original Prints From Wood and Lino by 35 New Zealand Artists from the 1930s to 1978”, typescript, Helen Hitchings Papers, Te Papa Archives. NRAM X33.

¹⁰⁴ Moore’s printmaking equipment is now in the collection of the Wai-te-ata Press, at the University of Victoria in Wellington.

¹⁰⁵ Kate McGahey, *The Concise Dictionary of New Zealand Artists: Painters, Printmakers, Sculptors*, Wellington, Gilt Edge, 2000 p. 175.

¹⁰⁶ Helen Hitchings “A Tribute to the New Zealand Artist John L. Moore”, typescript, Helen Hitchings Papers, Te Papa Archives. NRAM X33.

¹⁰⁷ He could for example have seen examples of Preston’s woodcuts reproduced by *Art In Australia*.

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Preston quoted in Roger Butler, *The Prints of Margaret Preston, A Catalogue Raisonné*, Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1987, p. 42.

Hilda Wiseman also made indigenous flora and fauna the main focus of her printmaking. Her linocut *Huias*, c.1928, (Plate 37), demonstrated her characteristic use of bold contrasts of black and white to indicate form, an approach which owed its origins to her experience as a commercial artist. In this instance she created a print of some impact, but as *A Bush Pathway*, linocut, c.1929, (Plate 38) showed, she would occasionally employ commercial techniques which detracted from, rather than enhanced, her work. Wiseman began working for the advertising company of Chandler & Co in 1915, where her managers included Quoin Club printmakers Arnold Goodwin and David Payne. She undertook formal training with Robert Procter at Elam in 1917, and John Ash at the Seddon Memorial Technical College from 1923 to 1924.¹⁰⁹ Wiseman became the first artist in the country to become a full-time printmaker when she established the Selwyn Studio in 1926.¹¹⁰ A decade earlier this would have been an unthinkable proposition, and indicated just how much demand for contemporary New Zealand prints had increased in the intervening period.

Distasteful though it may seem to contemporary historians, during the 1920s parallels were being drawn between the detrimental impact Pakeha development was having on the indigenous environment and the impact of such development on the country's indigenous people; both were regarded as being under threat of extinction by 'the march of progress'.¹¹¹ Spurred on by a belief that they were recording the last vestiges of a dying race, printmakers began showing greater interest in Māori subjects.

2.4.4 Māori

Painter C.F. Goldie had been producing images of Māori since the turn of the twentieth-century, and his approach, which blended ethnographical observation with

¹⁰⁹ Georgia Prince, 'Wiseman, Hilda Alexandra 1894-1982'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹¹⁰ Wiseman obtained the windows for her studio from the demolition of St. Stephen's School, which had built by Bishop Selwyn, and thereafter referred to her studio as the Selwyn Studio. J. Webster, "Hilda Wiseman at Selwyn Studio", *Art New Zealand*, No 30, Autumn 1984, p. 19.

¹¹¹ Maurice Hurst, "Saving the Culture of a Dying Race", *New Zealand Life*, Vol 4, No 2, 15 June 1925, p. 2.

historical detail and nationalist sentiment,¹¹² was one now widely adopted by printmakers. They appeared totally unaware that a Māori revival was in progress, a misperception that arose out of the very limited contact that occurred between Māori and Pakeha. It has been estimated that over 98% of Māori lived in isolated rural areas while a majority of Pakeha lived in urban areas and, as Michael King observed, the two lived “parallel lives in separate spheres”.¹¹³ Oblivious to the Māori renaissance, printmakers presented elderly Māori as emblems of a disappearing race. Trevor Lloyd and Stuart Peterson were particularly associated with prints of this type.



Fig. 10. C.F. Goldie, *Memories*, (oil), 1903

The theme of loss was central in Trevor Lloyd's *Shadows of the Past*, c.1925, (Plate 39), an etching of an elderly Māori woman with her face wreathed in shadows. Lloyd's interest in Māori ethnology was reflected in the careful way he researched and delineated the woman's moko and greenstone tiki. The influence of Goldie was clearly evident, with the print showing distinct parallels with Goldie's painting, *Memories*, (oil), 1903, (Fig. 10). Lloyd's attention to detail was also evident in *Lizard Skin*, (drypoint), 1928, (Plate 40), his portrait of an aged Māori chief with a full moko. The

¹¹² Roger Blackley, *Goldie*, Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery & David Bateman, 1997, p. 50.

¹¹³ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 2003, p. 284.

title was indicative of public attitudes towards Māoridom during this period. Lloyd's interest in Māori culture, however, was far from superficial: he studied Māori history, named his house *Whare Tane*, built his family's bach in the style of a Māori meeting house and his extensive collection of Māori artefacts was acquired by the Auckland Institute and Museum.¹¹⁴

Stuart Peterson's prints were also intended as a record of a lost way of life. For example, *Maori Carver*, (aquatint), 1929, (Plate 41), presented a white haired elder sitting cross-legged in front of an elaborately carved doorway, totally engrossed in carving a bone mere. Peterson was a printmaker who worked as an illustrator for the *New Zealand Free Lance*; and his prints of Māori were particularly popular among those who speculated in the print market. The Christchurch stockbroking firm of Foote & Tay bought out entire editions of Peterson's prints, and was able to guarantee potential investors that the plates of the prints had been destroyed when the edition size quoted had been reached.¹¹⁵

Even printmakers like Harry Linley Richardson and James McDonald who studied contemporary Māori culture, showed a preference for ignoring the present and focussing on traditional aspects of Māori life.¹¹⁶ Richardson's most popular print in terms of sales was an etching entitled *An Old Maori Woman*, 1927, (untraced).¹¹⁷ He recalled, "The Maori interested me. So far as I could I studied his carvings, his art generally at the old Dominion Museum, his mythology, visited his haunts in Wellington, read almost every book in the Museum Library."¹¹⁸ He took art students from Wellington Technical College on such frequent visits to the Museum to study

¹¹⁴ John Perry, 'Lloyd, Trevor, 1863-1937'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005. URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹¹⁵ Letter from Foote & Tay Sharebrokers, Christchurch to Fisher & Son Ltd, 23 March 1931, H. Fisher & Son Archive, item 205, Canterbury Museum Documentary Research Centre.

¹¹⁶ Both travelled with ethnologist Eldon Best to Otaki and the King Country to study marae life and custom. Jonathan Dennis, 'McDonald, James Ingram 1865-1935'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹¹⁷ Jane Vial, p. 20

¹¹⁸ H. Linley Richardson, "Reminiscences", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XI, No 1, 1939, p. 15.

Māori artefacts that special mention of it was made in the Art School's prospectus.¹¹⁹ McDonald wrote two monographs on Māori art during this period, *The Art of the Maori* and *The Decorative Arts of the Maori*.¹²⁰ In 1926 Apirana Ngata, the opposition minister of Native Affairs and Prime Minister Gordon Coates jointly drafted the *Maori Arts and Crafts Act* in an attempt to encourage the nascent Māori cultural revival.¹²¹ As a result of this initiative, McDonald gave up his directorship at the Dominion Museum to establish the Te Tuwharetoa School of Māori Arts and Crafts in Tokaanu.¹²² Although an etcher of distinction McDonald did not teach printmaking, but focussed solely on reviving the traditional crafts of woodcarving and weaving.¹²³

It is interesting to compare the above prints of frail, elderly Māori with the powerful young Māori leader seen in Quoin Club printmaker Arnold Goodwin's wood-engraving, *Hongi, Chief of a small Northern Tribe...*, c.1920, (Plate 42). Goodwin chose to present Hongi as a proud warrior staring defiantly at the viewer. This was one of a series of wood-engravings that Goodwin was commissioned to create on historical New Zealand subjects by Scottish distiller John Walker & Sons Ltd. Unlike his fine art colleagues, Goodwin seemed to be more aware of, and sensitive to, the Māori revival that was about to reshape New Zealand society.

With market demand for regionalist prints increasing, few printmakers created prints of any other subject matter. In order to be readily understood, regionalist prints had to be aesthetically accessible, a factor which encouraged printmakers to retain a representational style of printmaking, or at best, a limited and decorative interest in abstraction. Only those printmakers who chose to work overseas ventured beyond regionalist subject matter or experimented with Modernism.

¹¹⁹ Wellington Technical College, *Art School Prospectus*, 1926, np. Wellington High School Library.

¹²⁰ James McDonald, "The Art of the Maori", typescript, Hocken Library Archives, MS-0408, No 70 & "The Decorative Arts of the Maori", hand-written notes, MS-0033.

¹²¹ Michael King, p. 338.

¹²² Jonathan Dennis, *ibid*.

¹²³ Printmaking by Māori artists remained virtually unknown until Cliff Whiting was encouraged to adopt the medium by his mentor E. Mervyn Taylor in the 1950s.

2.5 Expatriate Printmakers

New Zealand printmakers working overseas during the 1920s were far less conservative than their predecessors like Mina Arndt and the Barraud brothers. Several chose to study under Modernist printmakers and even those who studied under traditional tutors adopted a more adventurous approach to printmaking. Expatriates regularly sent examples of their prints back for exhibition and these were reproduced in *Art In New Zealand*, giving printmakers here an opportunity to keep up to date with their progress. Frederick Coventry and Frank Weitzel, two of the most exciting expatriate printmakers of the period, studied at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London, which opened in 1926 and established itself as the centre of British avant-garde printmaking. Others like E. Heber Thompson preferred to enrol at the more conservative Royal College of Art or the Central Schools of Arts & Crafts.¹²⁴ The booming print market also encouraged expatriate painters to add printmaking to their practice.

Frederick Coventry began studying copper-engraving at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art under Iain Macnab in 1929. Coventry took a far from traditional approach to the medium, creating a series of Art Deco style engravings of contemporary building sites, streets and suburbs, which displayed a modernity rarely seen in architectural prints. For example, *Carinthia*, (copper-engraving), c.1929, (Plate 43), depicted the corrugated rooftops, new high rise apartment blocks and old terraced houses of Darlinghurst, Sydney.¹²⁵ The scene was presented as if the viewer was looking out over the suburb from a balcony festooned with enormous cacti. He also took an unusual approach to self-portraiture, presenting himself sprawled across a table in *Horizontal Portrait*, (etching), 1929, (Plate 44).¹²⁶ These works were included in the *Exhibition of Modern Prints* at the Twenty-One Gallery in December 1929, alongside those of his other Grosvenor School tutors, Graham Sutherland and Gwen Raverat. *The Times* commented “Mr F.H. Coventry is a newcomer, and his etching in pure line...

¹²⁴ Others studying printmaking overseas during this period included James Boswell, May Smith, Maude Sherwood, John Buckland Wright, Eleanor Hughes and E. D. J. Turner.

¹²⁵ Frederick Coventry, Artist's Papers, National Gallery of Australia, 77/721, Folio 16.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

excites interest".¹²⁷ Coventry had studied under Harry Linley Richardson at Wellington Technical College from 1922 to 1924, then for a brief time at Elam. By 1926 he had enrolled at the Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney, and was invited by Thea Proctor and Adrien Feint to join the Contemporary Group of Sydney Modernists, after which he decided to relocate to London to further his interest in modern art.¹²⁸

While Coventry's success was widely reported back in New Zealand, no mention at all was made of his fellow Wellingtonian and Contemporary Group colleague Frank Weitzel, who had the misfortune to hail from one of New Zealand's most reviled families. Born in Levin in 1905, Weitzel was the son of German immigrants whose Wellington home had been a meeting place for fellow socialists and anti-militarists during World War One.¹²⁹ According to *The New Zealand Herald*

During the war the family lived in Buller Street. The house was the rendezvous of anti-militarists and revolutionaries of a pronounced character.... All these men were arrested for talking anti-conscription.... It simply pleased the Weitzel family to encourage anything that would weaken the British fighting power.¹³⁰

Weitzel later claimed that his father was detained as an enemy-alien during the war, and the family had continued to be harassed even after his death in 1917.¹³¹ Frank's mother was certainly closely monitored by police, particularly after an incident in December 1918, when she gained admission to the Parliamentary Public Gallery during a debate on whether German internees should be deported, and threatened to kill a Member of Parliament.¹³² Frank Weitzel had only just begun attending art classes in

¹²⁷ "Modern Prints", *The Times*, 13 December 1929, p. 12.

¹²⁸ Sydney Thompson, "New Zealand Artists Abroad", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol III, No 10, December 1930, pp. 93-94.

¹²⁹ Kerry Taylor, 'Weitzel, Hedwig 1900-1971'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹³⁰ "Banned Literature - Woman Student Fined", *The New Zealand Herald*, 20 August 1921.

¹³¹ While Gustave Weitzel was registered as an alien, there is no record of him being interned as a prisoner of war, nor was his British naturalization revoked. Correspondence with Archives New Zealand, 1 October 2004.

¹³² In April 1920 police increased their surveillance, concerned that she may stage another attack during the forthcoming royal visit. New Zealand Police, "Report of Detective Sergeant W.E. Lewis relative to forthcoming Royal Visit. Mrs Mary Weitzel, German, Considered

Wellington when his mother migrated to San Francisco in 1921, taking him with her. Weitzel enrolled at a high school in San Francisco and in 1923 won a scholarship, which enabled him to spend the next three years studying at the California School of Fine Arts. The Dean of the School was Aucklander Eric Spencer Macky, a founding member of the California Society of Etchers, who probably encouraged Weitzel's interest in printmaking.¹³³ Weitzel studied sculpture, textile design and drawing, and in 1926 won a national scholarship for sculpture, which enabled him to enrol at the New York Art Students' League and the Munich Academy. After completing his studies in Munich he relocated to Sydney in 1928.¹³⁴ There he began creating abstract linocuts of streets, tramways, hotels and building sites that reflected his fascination with city life. As *Tram Lines*, (linocut), c.1929, (Plate 45) and *Hotel Cecil*, (linocut), c.1929-30, (Plate 46) demonstrated, he interpreted the city in terms of abstract pattern.

Weitzel's choice of subject matter suggested an awareness of the American urban realist printmakers, while his style showed an affinity with the Cubo-Futuristic linocuts popularised by Claude Flight of the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. Weitzel's most remarkable print was *Sydney Bridge, (Under Construction)*, (linocut), c.1929, (Plate 47), which focused on the geometric patterns of the steel girders being put into place during the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Ursula Prunster has noted that "His unusually close-up view of the girders and struts creates a strong sense of abstract design", and was in marked contrast to images by other artists who usually depicted it as part of the urban landscape.¹³⁵ Weitzel's work came to the attention of Thea Proctor and Adrien Feint, who invited him to join the Contemporary Group. *Art In Australia* devoted its September 1929 issue to the activities of the Contemporary Group, and included a short biography of Weitzel. However, Weitzel's success was not

Dangerous", 2 April 1920, Archives New Zealand Ref AAAB 478, 11al.

¹³³ Macky, an Elam graduate had received private tuition from C.F. Goldie, before enrolling at the National Gallery of Victoria School in 1903. He completed his training by studying at the Académie Julian from 1907 to 1910. David Angeloro, "Macky, Eric Spencer", *ibid*.

¹³⁴ Graeme Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture 1788-1975*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978, p. 106.

¹³⁵ Ursula Prunster, *The Sydney Harbour Bridge 1932-1982*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson in Assoc with AGNSW, 1982, p. 18.

reported in this country, where hostility towards his family was still rife.¹³⁶ Given the attitude of the New Zealand art establishment towards Modernism, it is unlikely that Weitzel's success would have been noted, even if he had hailed from a more conventional family.

In complete contrast, the international success of Dunedin etcher E. Heber Thompson was frequently reported. Thompson had begun studying overseas after serving with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in France and Egypt during World War One. Typical of his mannered, elegant printmaking style was, *The Diligence Party*, (drypoint), c.1927, (Plate 48), depicting two women and a man with a baby picnicking under the shade of a tree in the Italian countryside. Thompson's prints were enormously popular with collectors and were regularly featured in Malcolm Salaman's publication, *Fine Prints of the Year*. Thompson had studied at the Dunedin School of Art under Alfred O'Keefe, and gained an army scholarship which enabled him to study painting under Henry Tonks at the Slade School of Art, and etching under Sir Frank Short at the Royal College of Art before finishing his studies at the Central School of Arts and Crafts.¹³⁷ He was a finalist in the 1923 Prix de Rome etching competition, and elected an Associate of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers in 1924.¹³⁸

Although he was based in the USA, Kenneth Ballantyne's printmaking style showed a distinct affinity with the British Leon Underwood school of printmaking. Ballantyne's woodcut, [*Figures*], c.1926, (Fig. 11) for example, demonstrated the same treatment of the human form favoured by Underwood in its use of highlighting to suggest the contours of the body. Ballantyne worked as an artist for Daniel Frey Advertising in New York, but continued exhibiting his work at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts and wrote several articles on printmaking for *Art In New*

¹³⁶ Although Weitzel left New Zealand at the age of sixteen, he continued to introduce himself as a New Zealander. Since his premature death in 1932 art historians have variously described him as an Australian, American or British artist.

¹³⁷ Harry Tombs, "New Zealand Artists Abroad", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol III, No 10, December 1930, p. 88.

¹³⁸ Letter from Secretary, Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers to E. Heber Thompson, 10 January 1924, confirming his election as an Associate. Te Papa Archives, MS 89 CA 157/1.

Zealand.¹³⁹ He began his training under C.F. Goldie and Harry Wallace at Auckland Technical College, and from 1911 to 1914 studied under Richardson at Wellington Technical College. He spent the next four years studying graphic art at the Art Institute of Chicago before beginning his career as a commercial artist.



Fig. 11. Kenneth Ballantyne, [*Figures*], (woodcut), c.1926.

Expatriate artists, whose primary occupation was painting, also began to show a marked interest in printmaking during this period. Raymond McIntyre for example, had created only one monotype, [*Constance McIntyre*], 1905, before leaving the Canterbury College School of Art to study in London. He enrolled at the Westminster Technical Institute in 1909 where his tutors included William Nicholson and Walter Sickert.¹⁴⁰ Although McIntyre admired the printmaking of Edward Gordon Craig and James McNeil Whistler, it was not until he formed a friendship with Britain's leading graphic artist, Edward McKnight Kauffer, that he began experimenting with printmaking in earnest.¹⁴¹ One of McIntyre's earliest etchings, *Woman with Teacup*, 1917, (Plate 49), depicted a young woman with her eyes closed and chin resting on one hand. It shared the same Matissian linearity of his paintings of female heads that had already attracted

¹³⁹ Artist's File, Te Papa Library.

¹⁴⁰ Anne Kirker, "A European Context", R. Wilson et al, *Raymond McIntyre A New Zealand Painter*, Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery & Heinemann Publishers, 1984, p. 35.

¹⁴¹ Marie Coyle, "McIntyre and His Work: An Introduction", *ibid.*, p. 24.

him critical attention.¹⁴² By the early 1920s McIntyre was working as a painter, printmaker, writer, photographer, theatre and music critic,¹⁴³ and exhibiting with the Monarro Group, which included Paul Signac and M. Pissarro among its members.¹⁴⁴ McIntyre explored the same subject across a range of media, allowing an insight into his artmaking; these works included a hand-tinted lithograph entitled *Tulips*, (Plate 50), *Tulips in a Vase*, (linocut), (Plate 51) and *Tulips*, (oil painting), (Fig. 12), all c.1925.



Fig. 12. R. McIntyre, *Tulips*, (oil), c.1925

In the lithograph, McIntyre used a limited palette of muted colours and the composition was dominated by the repeating pattern of triangles formed by the table and shadows. The abbreviated execution and modernity of this work showed a distinct debt to the graphic art of his friend E. McKnight Kauffer. The linocut, *Tulips in a Vase*, indicated that McIntyre was also familiar with the Post-Impressionist style of printmakers like Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant who were associated with the Omega

¹⁴² Michael Dunn, *New Zealand Painting, A Concise History*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p. 60.

¹⁴³ Linda Tyler, 'McIntyre, Raymond Francis 1879-1933'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹⁴⁴ "The Monarro Group Exhibition at the Goupil Gallery", *The Times*, 5 March 1921, np.

Workshop. A comparison of the prints and the painting suggests that printmaking offered McIntyre more freedom of expression, possibly because he created prints for his own enjoyment and never exhibited them, while his paintings had to satisfy public and dealer demand. Consequently, this facet of his art has remained relatively unknown.¹⁴⁵

While McIntyre experimented with printmaking for his own personal satisfaction, many expatriate painters briefly adopted printmaking in order to take advantage of the robust print market. Typical was painter Marion Tylee whose Art Deco style linocut entitled *Rooftops*, c.1928, (Plate 52), was notable for its simple abstraction. It was exactly the kind of contemporary, affordable art being promoted as ideally suited for decorating the smaller, modern home.¹⁴⁶ On returning to New Zealand, Tylee created a series of linocut landscapes before resuming her career as a painter.¹⁴⁷

Mention has to be made of one other expatriate, Gordon Tovey, whose significance lay in the future impact he would have on art training in New Zealand. Tovey had studied under Harry Linley Richardson at Wellington Technical College from 1921 to 1924 before being employed as a commercial artist at the New Zealand Railways Advertising Studio.¹⁴⁸ In 1927 he left for London, and began working for Adelphi Associates, designing posters for the Southern Railway Company. He created Art Deco style posters, and was fascinated with his friend Len Lye's exploration of Primitivism and Cubo-Futuristic art.¹⁴⁹ When it came to printmaking, however, Tovey had difficulty achieving any sort of modernity, as demonstrated by his etching *Old Houses Off Tottenham Court Road*, c.1927, (Fig. 13). Tovey came to view printmaking

¹⁴⁵ Among McIntyre's other traced prints of the period are [*Landscape with Two Figures*], (linocut), c.1917, [*Street Scene*], (lithograph), c.1917, [*Street Scene*], (etching), c.1917 and [*French Window*], (linocut), c.1925.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Gulliver, "The Graphic Arts and Wall Decoration", *The Ladies' Mirror*, Vol 1 No 1, 1 July 1922, p. 28. Alexander Turnbull Library.

¹⁴⁷ A former student of Thomas McCormack and Archibald Nicoll, Tylee studied painting under Professor Tonks at the Slade School of Art from 1926 to 1929. Jean Thomas, *Marion Tylee, A Retrospective Exhibition*, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 1980, np.

¹⁴⁸ Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour, Gordon Tovey Artist Educator*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1998, pp. 16-20.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

and all other process-orientated arts with suspicion, believing they stifled creativity.¹⁵⁰ It was a belief that was to have major ramifications for the print when Tovey returned to New Zealand in the 1930s and reshaped the country's art curriculum.



Fig. 13. Gordon Tovey, *Old Houses Off Tottenham Court Road*, (etching), c.1927

2.6 Bookplates, Book Illustrations & Printed Textiles

Concurrent with increasing public interest in prints during the 1920s, printmakers both at home and abroad found themselves receiving growing numbers of commissions to create bookplates, book illustrations and printed textiles. Expanding their range of activities into these areas of design brought printmakers to greater public attention and helped raise the standard of design. Bookplates were created in a variety of media including woodcuts, linocuts and etchings, and it was common for artists to include their monogram within the design, indicating that they regarded them as works of art. Members of the public could commission a bookplate from an artist directly, or order them from advertising agencies such as Carlton's, who offered bookplate design and printing as one of their services. Bookplates had been commissioned and collected by enthusiasts in New Zealand since the 1890s, but they remained a minority interest

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

until competitions, such as one organised by the Wellington Arts Sketch Club in 1911, attracted a new generation of collectors.¹⁵¹



Fig. 14. Thomas Gulliver, *TVG*, Bookplate, (woodcut), 1928

Many bookplates of the period included motifs such as Māori carvings and indigenous flora and fauna, reflecting the prevalent desire for an art of national identity. Thomas Gulliver's bookplate, *TVG*, (woodcut), 1928, (Fig. 14), for example, consisted of a woodcut of a carved Māori head with his initials forming the tongue.¹⁵² This received an honourable mention at the Los Angeles International Exhibition of Bookplates, 1928.¹⁵³ The New Zealand printmaker most associated with bookplate design was Hilda Wiseman, whose interest was raised by Quoin Club bookplates and publications issued by the Australian Ex Libris Society.¹⁵⁴ She created her first linocut bookplate in 1925 and Siân Davis estimates that between then and her retirement in 1967, Wiseman created over 120 bookplate designs.¹⁵⁵ Indigenous flora and fauna, and

¹⁵¹ Pat Lawlor, (Shibli Bagarag), *New Zealand Book-Plates, Illustrated History & Bibliography*, Wellington: The Beltane Book Bureau, 1948, p. 2.

¹⁵² Other Quoin Club printmakers who created bookplates during this period included Eric Warner, David Payne, Herbert Tornquist and Arnold Goodwin.

¹⁵³ Ian Thwaites, *In Another Dimension: Auckland Bookplates 1920-1960*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2002. p. 19.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁵ Siân Davis, "Hilda Wiseman's Bookplates", Bachelor of Design dissertation, UNITEC

Māori carvings were recurrent motifs in Wiseman's bookplates.¹⁵⁶ Typical of her early style was *Huia Wiseman: Her Book*, (linocut), 1926, (Plate 53). Rather coarsely cut, this was created for her sister, Huia, and was a rebus plate, linking her to the native bird of the same name.¹⁵⁷ Far more modern in its execution was [*Connie Lloyd: Bookplate*], an etched bookplate featuring abstract Māori carved bookends, which Connie Lloyd designed for herself in 1929, (Plate 54).¹⁵⁸

The linocut bookplates designed by Len Lye and Frank Weitzel for Sydney musician Noel Pearson offer a rare opportunity to compare the work of two Modernists with strikingly different styles. In his linocut plate, *Noel Pearson: Ex Libris*, c.1925, (Plate 55), Lye depicted the musician as a Cubo-Futuristic robot with an automated arm stretched out over a keyboard.¹⁵⁹ Wystan Curnow observed that the head of the figure exactly replicated an abstract marble sculpture entitled *Unit*, which Lye also created in 1925.¹⁶⁰ Lye had worked as a commercial artist at Chandler & Co Advertising Company from 1918 to 1921 while studying under Harry Linley Richardson at the Wellington Technical College in the evenings.¹⁶¹ A complete contrast to Lye's plate was offered by Weitzel's elegantly restrained Art Deco colour linocut, *Noel Pearson: Ex Libris*, 1928, (Plate 56). With its classically draped figures, rising sun and antelopes, it showed a direct debt to Robert Bonfil's colour woodcut poster for the *Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, 1925.¹⁶²

Institute of Technology, Auckland, 1998, Vol 1, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Ruth Saunders, *The Book of Artists' Own Bookplates*, Claremont: Saunders Studio Press, 1933, p. 27. Art Gallery of New South Wales Archives.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ This was included in the *Australian Ex Libris Society's Annual Report*, 1930, p. 28. Art Gallery of New South Wales Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Barbara Blake, *Ex Libris, New Zealand Bookplates 1925-1950*, Wellington: National Library of New Zealand & the Alexander Turnbull Library, 1992, p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ Wystan Curnow, "Len Lye's Sculpture and the Body of his Work", *Len Lye, 1901-1980: a special issue*, *Art New Zealand*, No 17, 1981, p. 34.

¹⁶¹ He spent one term at the Canterbury College of Art in 1922 prior to leaving for Samoa and Sydney in 1924, finally arriving in London in 1926. Roger Horrocks, *Len Lye, A Biography*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001, pp. 24-25.

¹⁶² Robert Bonfil's colour woodblock poster that advertised this exhibition became an icon of

The fledgling New Zealand publishing industry also provided commissions for printmakers. Stuart Peterson rose to prominence through the illustrations he created for *Legends of the Maori* by James Cowan and Sir Maui Pomare. The frontispiece of Volume One was an etching entitled *The Gathering of the Legends*, c.1929, (Fig. 15), which depicted a group of Māori seated around a fire inside a whare whakairo.¹⁶³ Although Petersen paid great attention to ethnographical detail, the style was antiquated.

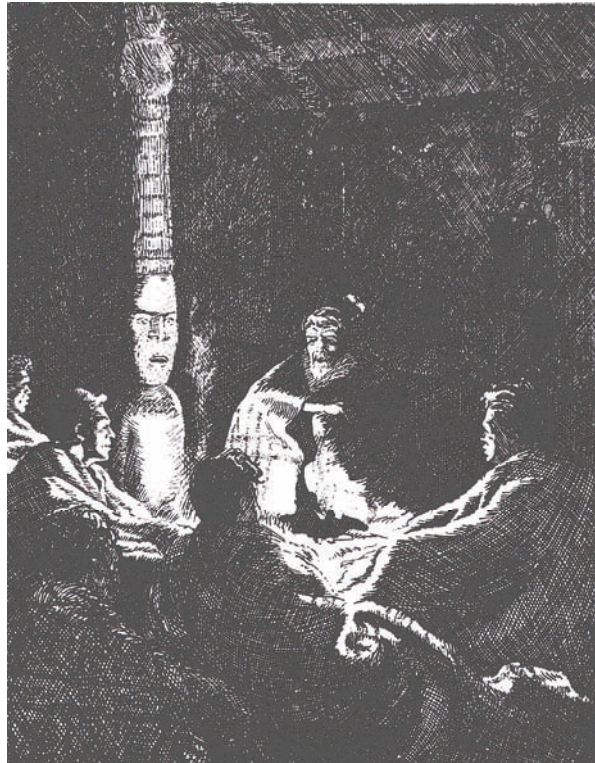


Fig. 15. Stuart Peterson, *The Gathering of the Legends*, (etching), c.1929

In response to the growth of local publishing houses, the Canterbury College School of Art formally established a Black and White & Book Illustration Department under the management of Leonard Booth in 1920.¹⁶⁴ Many of its students were commissioned by Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, a Christchurch publishing house

the Art Deco Movement; it depicted a classically draped woman and antelope running alongside one another, representing elegance combined with speed.

¹⁶³ James Cowan, *Legends of the Maori*, Vol 1, illustrated by Stuart Peterson, Wellington: Fine Arts, 1930, frontispiece.

¹⁶⁴ Neil Roberts, *Leonard Booth 1879-1974*, Canterbury Vignette Series, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 2000, p.14.

specialising in the production of children's illustrated books and school textbooks.¹⁶⁵ While such commissions provided artists with much needed income, they also inhibited their creativity. Daisy Osborn for one “became tired of demands for her fairy subjects, pretty little things, not the sort of robust good work that she could do....”¹⁶⁶ Art societies began including book illustration as an exhibition category in its own right, and offering prizes for works based on popular fairy stories and poems. Typical of this sort of print was Gladys Anderson's *The Passing Stream*, (woodcut), c.1929, (Plate 57), an allegorical work of an old woman contemplating a stream while a line of young women walk by in the background.¹⁶⁷

Demand was also growing for printmakers to create hand-printed textiles, and these too began appearing in art society annual exhibitions. The search for an art of national identity even pervaded this area of design. Roland Hipkins asked

Is it not possible for New Zealand artists to produce designs for fabrics which breathe the spirit of this Dominion? Unique conditions exist for the designer to adapt the typical trees, foliage, flora, birds, landscape and life of this country as motifs in design for decoration of textiles.¹⁶⁸

The example he provided of his own work, [*New Zealand Theme Printed Fabric*], (linoblock), 1929, (Fig. 16), abounded with national imagery, including smoking volcanoes, a Māori canoe and meeting house, and a kiwi. It is interesting to compare this with the modernity of the linocut fabric pattern by Hipkins published in

¹⁶⁵ Lynne Jackett, “Children's Books”, Penny Griffith, et al, *Book & Print Culture in New Zealand: A Guide to Print Culture in Aotearoa*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, p. 141.

¹⁶⁶ Ann Calhoun, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in New Zealand 1870-1940*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000, p. 148.

¹⁶⁷ Anderson graduated from Canterbury College School of Art in 1922 and worked as an art mistress at the Auckland Technical College until 1927. She then returned to Christchurch and worked as an illustrator for *The Christchurch Press* and as a commercial artist at Beath & Co., *ibid*, p. 174.

¹⁶⁸ Roland Hipkins, “Block Prints”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol II No 5, September 1929, p. 46.

Margaret Dobson's manual *Lino Prints* (1930),¹⁶⁹ an indication of how the search for national imagery could on occasion detract from an artist's work.



Fig. 16. Roland Hipkins, [*New Zealand Theme Printed Fabric*], (linoblock), 1929

Rather more avant-garde were the textiles created by Len Lye for Celandine Kennington's *Footprints Studio* in London.¹⁷⁰ While most of these were Surrealist-style batiks, the studio also specialised in hand-printed fabrics, and it is possible that Lye's [*Tapa Cloth Design*], (colour linocut), c.1929, (Plate 58), was intended for this purpose. Featuring circular designs in ochre, creams and browns in a typical tapa grid-like pattern, this was printed on brown paper giving it the appearance of an Art Deco styled tapa cloth.¹⁷¹ Lye was familiar with traditional Polynesian tapa cloth (barkcloth) designs, having studied them at Canterbury Museum in Christchurch in 1922 and during his sojourn to Samoa in 1924.¹⁷² Lye's life-long interest in tapa cloth was later revealed

¹⁶⁹ Margaret Dobson, *Lino Prints*, Pitman's Craft For All Series, London: Sir Isaac Pitmans & Sons Ltd, 1930, p. 81.

¹⁷⁰ Roger Horrocks, p. 85.

¹⁷¹ Prints in the Len Lye Collection at the Govett-Brewster Gallery have yet to be fully catalogued. Correspondence with Tyler Cann, Curator, Len Lye Collection, 17 October 2005.

¹⁷² Roger Horrocks, p. 40.

in his comment “Tapa design is really just joy, it’s beautifully, geometrically sorted out and coloured....”¹⁷³ Weitzel also created hand-printed textiles while working in Sydney,¹⁷⁴ and designed a Bauhaus-style abstract wall hanging for the Burdekin House Exhibition of Antique and Modern Furniture held in 1929.¹⁷⁵

2.7 The Rising Status of the Print

Given the reluctance of the New Zealand art establishment to accept the print as a fine art, printmakers here initially received critical recognition from the Australian and British art establishments. Early international recognition came with *Art In Australia's* decision to publish a special issue on etching in New Zealand and Australia in 1921.¹⁷⁶ The New Zealand section surveyed the work of Eric Warner, Richard Wallwork, Archibald Nicoll, Harry Linley Richardson, Flora Scales and Mina Arndt. The newly formed Australian Painter-Etchers’ Society also invited Wallwork, Richardson, Arndt, Trevor Lloyd and Scales to become members. Gulliver and Goodwin were invited to take part in a landmark exhibition of prints held at the Tyrell Gallery, Sydney in 1923, where their prints were exhibited alongside those of Margaret Preston, Lionel Lindsay and Napier Waller. Further recognition came with an invitation for New Zealand printmakers to participate in the British Empire Exhibition in London in 1924. Etchings, linocuts and aquatints were exhibited by Richardson, Gulliver, Payne, Albert Hooper, McDonald, Trevor Lloyd and Wallwork.¹⁷⁷

The New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition which opened in Dunedin in 1925 provided an ideal opportunity to showcase prints by contemporary

¹⁷³ Len Lye quoted in Roger Horrocks, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Jean Campbell, *Early Sydney Moderns*, John Young and the Macquarie Galleries 1916-1946, Roseville, NSW: Craftsman House, 1988, p.115.

¹⁷⁵ Sydney Ure Smith, *The Burdekin House Exhibition Catalogue*, Sydney: The Burdekin House Organizing Committee, 1929, np. National Gallery of Australia Archives.

¹⁷⁶ Maurice Hurst, “Etching in New Zealand”, *Art In Australia*, No 9, Special Issue: *Etching in Australia and New Zealand*, 1921, np.

¹⁷⁷ Memorandum from the Department of Industry & Commerce to James McDonald of the Dominion Museum regarding selection of New Zealand art for the British Empire Exhibition, 1924. Te Papa Archives, MU000216.

New Zealand artists. Two print galleries were included in the exhibition and the Organising Committee trumpeted that it was “the most representative collection of Modern Prints ever exhibited in New Zealand or in the Southern Hemisphere”.¹⁷⁸ It certainly was one of the largest contemporary print exhibitions mounted in Australasia.¹⁷⁹ However, the Fine Arts Committee, comprised of Archie Fisher, Mabel Hill and George Chance, chose ten traditional etchings, all of them by the Lloyd family, to represent New Zealand printmaking.¹⁸⁰ Art societies elsewhere showed the same reluctance to include prints by contemporary New Zealand artists in their exhibitions. This impasse was broken through the combined efforts of art dealer E. Murray Fuller, art publisher Harry Tombs, print curator Thomas Gulliver and art teacher Richard Wallwork who were determined to bring the creative print to public attention.

Fuller had been among the first dealers to sell contemporary New Zealand prints, and in 1920 expanded his business by opening a gallery in Wellington “maintained solely for the display of New Zealand Art”.¹⁸¹ Among printmakers he represented were Harry Linley Richardson, James McDonald, Mina Arndt, Flora Scales, Wallwork, Archibald Nicoll, Eric Warner and Arnold Goodwin. E. Murray Fuller and his wife Mary were, however, also ardent Anglophiles, who believed that local artists could also benefit from exposure to the ‘best’ of British art.¹⁸² They organised frequent

¹⁷⁸ International Exhibition Organising Committee, *The International Exhibition of the Fine Arts: New Zealand & South Seas International Exhibition*, Dunedin: J. McIndoe, 1925, p. 7.

¹⁷⁹ Among printmakers represented were Frank Brangwyn, Laura Knight, Muirehead Bone, and Sir Frank Short. Prints were also a feature of the Women’s Arts & Crafts Display; etchings and woodcuts were submitted by American and Australian women, and the Society of Women Artists (London) sent a loan exhibition of prints. New Zealand women contributed colour woodcuts, posters and bookplates. Unfortunately no details of these have yet been traced. George Thompson, *Official Record of the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition, Dunedin, 1925-1926*, Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie, 1927, p. 119.

¹⁸⁰ Trevor Lloyd’s etchings included *Nikau Palm*, *Shadows of the Past*, *Not Understood* and *Be It Ever So Humble*; Connie Lloyd’s *The Old Canoe*, *Fir Trees*, *The Old Road* and *Tea Tree*; and Olive Lloyd’s *Girl’s Head* and *The Black Hat*.

¹⁸¹ E. Murray Fuller advertisement, *New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts Annual Exhibition Catalogue*, 1921, np. Other art dealers who began representing New Zealand printmakers included John Leech, Brodie & Alexander, J. H. Saunders, Fisher & Sons and Abernethy’s Ltd.

¹⁸² Ann Calhoun, “Two Wellington Entrepreneurs of the ‘Thirties, The Murray-Fullers. I: Edwin

travelling exhibitions of etchings by Royal Academy artists such as Frank Brangwyn, Laura Knight, Seymour Hayden and Sir Frank Short, and encouraged public galleries to purchase these works as exemplars for New Zealand printmakers.¹⁸³ To some extent this offset their efforts to support local printmakers, by implying that their prints were inferior to British ones.

The establishment of the journal *Art in New Zealand* in 1928 gave printmakers their first major public forum. Unlike its predecessor *The Triad* which ceased publication in 1927, it adopted the motto “An Art of Our Own” and featured numerous examples of linocuts, wood-engraving, lithographs and aquatints by contemporary New Zealand artists, and regular articles on printmaking. As well as promoting the print in his journal, editor Harry Tombs gave numerous practical printmaking demonstrations to art society members and art students. After serving an apprenticeship with his father's company, Whitcombe and Tombs in Christchurch, Tombs had gone on to study at Heatherley's School in London, where he specialised in etching and aquatints.¹⁸⁴ Tombs also received some etching tuition from expatriate E. Heber Thompson.

In the closing stages of the decade Gulliver organised a series of major print exhibitions at the Auckland City Art Gallery, borrowing prints from private collectors to supplement the Gallery's small print collection. He had little difficulty in persuading collectors to lend prints for these exhibitions, as they frequently made use of his expertise.¹⁸⁵ In 1927 alone, Gulliver organised an *Exhibition of Old and Modern Etchings*, and an *Exhibition of Japanese Colour Prints from the Collections of Mr H.*

Murray Fuller”, *Art New Zealand*, Vol 23, Autumn 1982, p. 21.

¹⁸³ E. Murray Fuller, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Contemporary British Art*, shown at the Art Gallery, Christchurch 26 July to 4 August 1928. William Baverstock Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury

¹⁸⁴ James Brodie, ‘Tombs, Harry Hugo 1874-1966’. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹⁸⁵ Dadley reputedly owed the origin of his print collection to Gulliver. According to Gilbert Meadows, Dadley was a keen collector of Japanese snuff bottles and it was Gulliver who first realised that they were arriving packaged in *Ukiyo-e* prints. Gilbert Meadows, “Some Random Notes on the Quoin Club 1916-1929”, unpublished manuscript, p. 15, NZ MS 802, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

Dadley and Captain George Humphreys-Davies.¹⁸⁶ The success of these exhibitions led to John Barr appointing Gulliver Honorary Curator of Prints, and although the role was an honorary one, he was the first person in the country to hold such a position.¹⁸⁷ Gulliver included a small section of contemporary New Zealand prints in the *Exhibition of Prints Illustrating the Graphic Arts* in 1929. Public interest in this section was so great that he immediately began planning the first national exhibition of twentieth-century New Zealand prints, a landmark exhibition that took place in Auckland in 1930.

Interest in printmaking in the South Island was driven by Wallwork, now President of the Canterbury Society of Arts. Contemporary prints were featured in *The Exhibition of Graphic and Plastic Crafts, Drawings & Studies* staged by the Canterbury Society of Arts in September 1928.¹⁸⁸ Only a month later, Wallwork was helping Ernest Findlay organise an exhibition of two hundred etchings by fifteen members of the Australian Painter-Etchers' Society.¹⁸⁹ This exhibition was held at Charles Begg & Co Ltd's Recital Hall in Christchurch; New Zealand printmakers represented included Wallwork, Trevor Lloyd and J.M. Thomasson.¹⁹⁰ In 1929 Wallwork organised another *Exhibition of Graphic and Plastic Crafts, Drawings & Studies*, which attracted entries from printmakers throughout New Zealand.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Auckland City Council Library Committee, *Catalogue of a Loan Collection of Japanese Colour Prints owned by Mr H. S. Dadley and Captain Humphreys-Davies, shown in the Art Gallery, Auckland, October 25 - November 19, 1927*, Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1927.

¹⁸⁷ John Barr, "T.V.Gulliver 1891-1933", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 6, No 2, December 1933, p. 77.

¹⁸⁸ Harry Tombs (ed.), "Art Notes – Christchurch", *Art In New Zealand*, December 1928, Vol I, No 2, p. 143.

¹⁸⁹ Neil Roberts, *Richard and Elizabeth Wallwork*, Canterbury Vignettes Series, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, p. 21.

¹⁹⁰ "Etching Exhibition, Some Beautiful Work", *The Press*, November 1928, p. 6. Richard Wallwork File, Christchurch Art Library.

¹⁹¹ The Canterbury Society of Arts, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Graphic and Plastic Crafts, Drawings and Studies*, 22 October 1929. William Baverstock Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

2.8 Conclusion

By 1929 the institutional infrastructure required to launch the print as a fine art medium was in place. Printmakers had nationwide access to training and regular opportunities to exhibit their prints; they could also hope to be represented by an art dealer, and to having their work featured in *Art In New Zealand*. They were able to visit regular exhibitions of prints by British and Australian artists, and were being invited to exhibit overseas. The rising status of the print had not, however, been achieved without arousing some controversy. A particular bone of contention was that many art societies were still reluctant to include prints in their annual exhibitions and preferred to exhibit them in less prestigious craft exhibitions, such as the *Exhibition of Graphic and Plastic Crafts, Drawings & Studies*, organised by Wallwork in Christchurch in 1929. Although *Art In New Zealand* reassuringly reported “The Exhibition was a great success, and promises well for the craft side of art, which, after all, cannot be separated from art, as all good artists are craftsmen”,¹⁹² differences of opinion over such matters were leading to bitter disputes among art society members. For example, Canterbury Society of Arts Council member Francis Shurrock resigned soon after this exhibition was staged.¹⁹³ Ostensibly he resigned for health reasons, but it was widely known that Shurrock strongly disagreed with the arts being divided into fine and craft arts in such a manner.¹⁹⁴ This was not a localised disagreement; a similar debate divided the Wanganui Arts and Crafts Society throughout the 1920s, its members finally voting to change its name to the Wanganui Art Society in 1929.¹⁹⁵ Despite these warning signs, the foundation had been established which would allow the print to reach its zenith as a fine art in New Zealand during the 1930s, when it was widely regarded as the most democratic of art forms.

¹⁹² Harry Tombs (ed.), “Art Notes – Christchurch”, *Art In New Zealand*, December 1929, Vol II, No 6, p. 142.

¹⁹³ Canterbury Society of Arts, “Minute Book, 25 November 1929”, Christchurch Art Gallery Archives.

¹⁹⁴ Neil Roberts, *A Canterbury Perspective, A New Order 1890-1930*, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1990, np.

¹⁹⁵ Wanganui Arts Society, *Kindred Spirits: the Wanganui Arts Society Centenary 1901-2001*, Wanganui: Sarjeant Gallery, 2001, np.

CHAPTER THREE

THE 1930s: THE DEMOCRATIC PRINT

“Away with art for art's sake. It is a bourgeois prejudice, Art for agitation, for the organisation of social conscience, for the creation of a new man — these are the things that matter”.¹

Printmaking was one of the few arts which positively flourished during the Depression that devastated New Zealand in the early 1930s.² The Government's mishandling of the crisis politicised a generation of artists,³ many of whom adopted the print as a means of making their left-wing views more widely known. Others also began promoting the print as a democratic artform in the sense that it had the potential to make original art affordable to greater numbers of people. The approach to printmaking favoured by these artists was social realism, they documented the lives of ordinary people in figurative prints that were critical of social inequities, but more commonly, simply reflected the nuances of everyday life. Printmakers fighting for greater political freedom were no longer content to accept the dictates of conservative art societies, leading to more interest being shown in experimental printmaking. Throughout this turbulent decade, however, regionalism remained the major preoccupation of most printmakers. Indeed, the diversity of subject matter and styles adopted during the 1930s made it one of the most exciting periods in the country's printmaking history.

Stephen Champ of the Elam School of Art and Leonard Morrison of Auckland University College were at the forefront of the social realist movement, creating prints

¹ J. W. Prince, “Art In The World Crisis”, *The Phoenix*, University College Literary Club, University of Auckland, Vol 2, No 1, March 1933, p. 15.

² Printmaking activity increased significantly during this decade when 1,325 prints were created compared to 639 during the 1920s. Even discounting the 300 prints created by New Zealand artists based overseas during the 1930s, the 1,025 prints produced by those resident in New Zealand indicated that the popularity of printmaking as a fine art had reached new heights. These statistics are based on the prints recorded in the print database, a summary of which can be found in the Print Survey included at the end of Volume Two.

³ Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1920-1940: Adaptation and Nationalism*, Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, 1975, p. 60.

that were openly critical of the Government. Prints, being created in multiples, were cheaper to produce than oil paintings or sculptures, allowing them to respond quickly to current events by creating images that could easily be reproduced in radical journals. More moderate left-wing artists associated with the New Zealand Society of Artists, such as Christopher Perkins and Francis Shurrock, agreed that art should reflect the everyday lives of ordinary people,⁴ but also took the approach that it should also be affordable to them.⁵ One of the Society's major objectives was to encourage the building of an art of national identity by persuading the general public and art galleries to collect regionalist art.⁶ In the middle of the Depression this seemed a futile task, but realising the potential of the print to make contemporary New Zealand art affordable to greater numbers of people, the Society began promoting printmaking as the most democratic of artforms. As a consequence, more artists adopted printmaking during this decade than at any other time in the country's history, an innovation aided by the widespread availability of printmaking training offered by La Trobe teachers and the growing number of printmakers working in state and private schools.⁷

The dominance of etching came to an end as artists began exploiting the expressive possibilities of the linocut and the woodcut to create bold and dramatic social realist and abstract prints, and simplified regionalist prints. The interest printmakers were showing in the linocut was commented on by art critic Eros in his review of the Dunedin Branch of the New Zealand Society of Artists' exhibition in 1934. He observed, "With the growth of modern art and its love for simplified design and flat

⁴ Francis Shurrock, "Art Must be An Expression of Life", *N. Z. Radio Record*, 15 June 1934, p. 18.

⁵ *New Zealand Society of Artists, Rules and Constitution*, July 1933, np. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

⁶ New Zealand Society of Artists (Inc), *Catalogue of Christchurch Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Artists*, Christchurch: NZSOA, October 1934, p. 17. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

⁷ Harry Linley Richardson taught at Palmerston North Girls' and Boys' High Schools, E. J. Dorothy Turner at Nga Tawa, A.J. Rae and Alexander McLintock at Timaru Boys High, Arthur Hipwell at King's College Auckland, William Allen at Nelson College and John Mills Thomasson at Christchurch Technical College. Harry Vye Miller taught in several Dunedin schools and ran a private art school in the city. Adele Younghusband taught at Hamilton Technical College and opened a private art school in Hamilton.

shapes, lino has proved a most suitable means for expressing the artists' thoughts and emotions".⁸ In the same year, the Dunedin School of Art reported that fifteen students had adopted linocutting and college journals indicate it was increasingly practiced by art students elsewhere.⁹ Linocutting was particularly popular among student printmakers at the Elam School of Art, where Louise Tilsley, tutor in printmaking and calligraphy, wrote a guide entitled "Wood and Linoleum Cutting (an ancient art revived)".¹⁰ The Art Deco style of linocutting that Tilsley favoured could be seen in her colour linocut, *Waiting*, c.1930, (Fig. 17), featuring a cat waiting for its owner to return.



Fig. 17. Louise Tilsley, *Waiting*, (colour linocut), c.1930
Private Collection Christchurch

⁸ Eros, "New Zealand Society of Artists. First Dunedin Exhibition, Part III", *Otago Daily Times*, 26 September 1934, p. 5. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

⁹ See for example, "Special Art", *King Edward Technical College Magazine*, December 1934, Vol 1 No 1, p. 22. Hocken Library Archives.

¹⁰ Tilsley may have been introduced to printmaking through her friendship with Hilda Wiseman, Connie Lloyd, May Smith, Phyllis Crowley and Adele Younghusband. Ian Thwaites, *In Another Dimension: Auckland Bookplates 1920-1960*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2002, p. 32.

Interest in linocutting was also stimulated by the publication of the first New Zealand printmaking manual, M. Egger's *Linograving For Beginners, A Complete Illustrated Course of Self-Instruction* (1932).¹¹ It was published by Coulls Somerville Wilkie Ltd, which also sold linocutting toolsets, linoleum blocks, printing papers and inks; printmakers who lacked a press could send their cut linoblocks to any one of the company's regional branches for printing.¹²

Printmakers could purchase imported British linocut manuals such as Margaret Dobson's *Lino Print* (1930), which contained examples of linocuts by Wellington Technical College teachers Jenny Campbell and Roland Hipkins, and leading British modernist printmaker Claude Flight. Printmakers were also made aware of the Futuristic linocut style promoted by Flight of the Grosvenor School of Modern Art through his manuals, *Lino-Cuts: A Handbook of Linoleum-cut Colour Printing* (1927) and *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing* (1934), which contained a linoblock by Frank Weitzel. Linocuts by Flight's Australian students Ethel Spowers, Eveline Syme and Dorrit Black were reproduced in *Art in Australia*, and they promoted the colour linocut movement by staging exhibitions in Melbourne in December 1930, April and December 1932, and September 1937.¹³

Leo Bensemann recalled there was also great interest in Japanese woodcuts among artists during the 1930s as a result of availability of reasonably priced Japanese prints, and the efforts of print collectors who gave the public access to their collections by lending their prints to touring exhibitions.¹⁴ According to Bensemann, "All this awakened a great interest in Japanese woodcuts which in a minor way could be compared with the excitement aroused in France [during the nineteenth-century] when

¹¹ H.M. Eggers, *Linograving For Beginners, A Complete Illustrated Course of Self-Instruction*, Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie Ltd, 1932. Aotearoa New Zealand Centre, Christchurch City Libraries. This manual is now very scarce, only three copies have been traced to date.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³ Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age, Claude Flight and the Grosvenor School*, Aldershot: Scolar Press in association with the National Gallery of Australia, 1995, pp. 67-68.

¹⁴ Avenal McKinnon, "Leo Bensemann", *Art New Zealand*, No 30, Autumn 1984, p. 33.

they were first discovered”.¹⁵ For example, *The Loan Exhibition of Oriental Art from Private Collections*, which toured the country from 1934 to 1935, attracted record crowds. Drawn from the collections of Captain Humphrey Davies and Sir Joseph Kinsey, it included works by Okamura Masonobu, Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsushika Hokusai and Ando Hiroshige.¹⁶ In Christchurch, enormous crowds visited the exhibition daily, and art students made frequent return trips to study the exhibits.¹⁷

The interest printmakers showed in the woodcut and the linocut caught art schools completely unawares; both Wellington Technical College and Elam School of Art had recently installed new etching rooms in anticipation that etching would continue as the primary print medium. Interest in etching, however, was governed as much by economic factors as aesthetic ones. Investors had been speculating in etchings, purchasing entire editions and onselling them at a profit, but the Wall Street Crash of 1929 brought this practice to an end. In March 1931 for example, the Christchurch stockbroking firm of Foote & Tay, which had invested in etchings by Stuart Peterson, was trying to recoup its losses by selling them to Fisher & Son.¹⁸ This attempt appears to have failed, and when the etchings were exhibited at Eaton’s Gallery a month later, the prices of some had fallen by a third.¹⁹ Another sign of the declining fortune of etching was the lack of public interest shown in the *Exhibition of Etchings from Gallery Twenty-One* in London, which toured the country in 1937. This included works by Laura Knight, James Whistler and Frank Brangwyn, etchers whose works had once been avidly sought by New Zealand buyers. The Canterbury Society of Arts waived

¹⁵ Leo Bensemann quoted in McKinnon., *ibid.*

¹⁶ *Catalogue of a Loan Collection of Oriental Art from Private Collections*, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, May 1935. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

¹⁷ “Art Notes: Christchurch”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol VIII, No 1, September 1935, p. 57.

¹⁸ Letter from Foote & Tay Sharebrokers, Christchurch to Fisher & Son Ltd, 23 March 1931, *H. Fisher & Son Archive*, item 205, ARC 1993.35, Canterbury Museum Documentary Research Centre.

¹⁹ Foote & Tay had offered to sell *Day Dreams* to Fishers & Son Ltd for 3 guineas in March 1931 but in April 1931 it was on sale at Eaton’s Gallery for 2 guineas. *Pen Drawings and Etchings by Stuart Peterson*, Eaton's Gallery Wellington, 15 April-May 6, 1931. *Ibid.*

admission charges in an attempt to encourage visitors to the exhibition, but to no avail.²⁰ The Depression, coupled with the public's growing preference for woodcuts and linocuts, saw the value of etchings fall dramatically by 1939.²¹

3.1 Social Realist Prints

It was no coincidence that the advent of social realism in printmaking appeared at the height of the Depression when the country was experiencing the worst unrest in its history. By 1932 approximately 40% of the male Pakeha workforce was unemployed, and the Coalition Government led by Gordon Coates tried to encourage economic recovery by cutting the salaries of all public servants by ten percent.²² Teacher training colleges were closed down and over 1,500 teachers, including La Trobe teachers Roland Hipkins and Robert Donn, lost their positions. Commercial artists were also very badly affected.²³ Not untypical was Gordon Tovey who, having recently returned from London, was unable to find a position in an advertising agency, and supported himself by working on a relief road gang.²⁴ There was no state welfare system in place to help those in need and matters deteriorated to a point where riots broke out in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin in 1932. The Government responded by introducing the Public Safety Conservation Act and Emergency Power Act, which effectively curtailed civil liberties.²⁵ It was a climate in which even those who normally

²⁰ "Art Notes Christchurch", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol X, No 1, September 1937, p. 50.

²¹ "Fashions in Art. Plight of Etching. The Slump in Values", *The Evening Post*, 31 August 1939, np. National Art Gallery, Newspaper Clipping Books, MU000134, Te Papa Archives.

²² Official statistics omitted Māori, women workers and men under 20 years of age, and the actual number of unemployed was closer to 100,000 people. Tony Simpson, *The Sugar Bag Years*, Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 1990, p. 14.

²³ The belief that artists were forced by economic hardship to seek work as commercial artists during the Depression is erroneous. Advertising agencies were as badly affected by the Depression as other businesses and were firing rather than hiring artists at this time. See Jack Illott, *Creating Customers: the Story of Illott Advertising, New Zealand, 1892-1982*, Auckland: Ray Richards, 1985, p. 31.

²⁴ Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour, Gordon Tovey Artist Educator*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1998, p. 50.

²⁵ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 2003, p. 348.

avoided politics became radicalised.²⁶ Printmakers reacted by creating social realist prints that highlighted their concerns about the Government's failure to help those in need, and by making the lives of ordinary people the focus of their art. The radicalisation of New Zealand printmakers was more than just a local response to the country's economic crisis, it was also related to the rise of an international phenomenon known as the Popular Front. This movement united those concerned about "the rise of Fascism, the world crisis of capitalism, and... the course of the Spanish Civil War, they felt drawn to participate as artists in what offered itself as a plausible world-wide movement for social justice".²⁷

New Zealand populist printmakers found themselves on a collision course with regional art societies and public galleries who still regarded art as being "blessed by the Muses" and firmly believed it should not be "soiled by subject matter dealing with poverty and protest".²⁸ Their prints were not welcome in art society exhibitions, and made their first appearance in left-wing journals such as the Auckland University College student magazines *The Phoenix* and *Kiwi*, rather than on gallery walls.²⁹ One of the earliest social realist prints was Stephen Champ's wood-engraving, [*Saturday Afternoon*], 1932, (Plate 59), which illustrated a story about a woman factory worker driven mad by the noise of industrial machinery. Champ accentuated the woman's anguish by presenting her trapped in concentric web of stylised sound-waves. Although prints of working life had been common since at least 1919, this was the first attempt to criticise the conditions people worked in. Champ had been recruited from Britain to

²⁶ P. J. Gibbons, "The Climate of Opinion", Geoffrey Rice (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edition, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 327.

²⁷ Paul Wood, "Realism in the 1930s", Briony Fer et al, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 1993, pp. 256-257.

²⁸ Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting*, Auckland: David Bateman, 1990, p. 120.

²⁹ Student magazines published during the 1930s included: *Canta*, *Oriflamme*, *Sirocco*, and the *Canterbury College Review* at Canterbury University College; *The Phoenix* and *Kiwi* at Auckland University College; *Spike* at Victoria University College; and the *Critic* at the University of Otago. While all were illustrated with prints, social realist prints were most prevalent in *The Phoenix* and *Kiwi*.

teach etching at the Elam School of Art in 1932;³⁰ he cared little for Government restrictions on freedom of expression and his confrontational social realist style was without precedent in New Zealand art.

Also typical was his wood-engraving, *But It Is Not Heat That Makes Him Sweat*, 1932, (Fig. 18), which illustrated a poem by R.A.K. Mason about a man about to be hung. Champ directed the viewer's attention to the terrified stare of the man, and cut the title of the print into the woodblock, like graffiti hacked into a prison door.

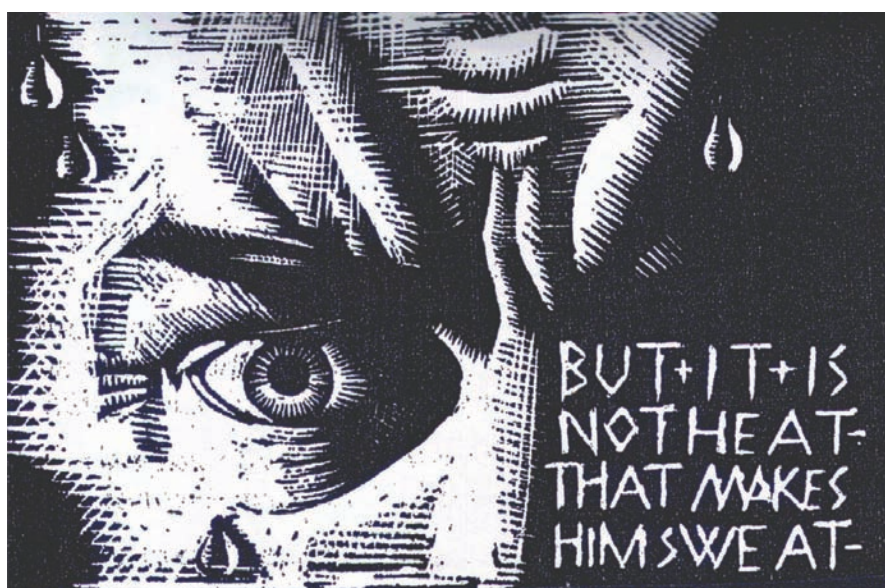


Fig. 18. Stephen Champ, *But It Is Not Heat That Makes Him Sweat*, (wood-engraving), 1932

Champ's most overtly political print was *Strictly Non-Controversial*, (wood-engraving), 1933, (Plate 60), which featured a gagged broadcaster surrounded by three pillars of the establishment, a politician, a bishop and a general. It drew attention to the Prime Minister's attempts to silence the Reverend C.G. Scrimgeour, an Auckland Methodist Minister who was using his daily devotional broadcasts on 1ZR to question why there was poverty and hunger in a land of plenty.³¹ The Government could hardly attack him for preaching the Gospel, but bought the station and closed it down.³² *Strictly*

³⁰ Interview with Champ's former student, Ron Stenberg, 2 April 2005.

³¹ C. G. Scrimgeour, John A. Lee & Tony Simpson, *The Scrim-Lee Papers*, Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1976, p. 38.

³² Later Scrimgeour stated "People today don't realise the sort of restrictions we had on broadcasting. All kinds of restrictions, unbelievable restrictions. You couldn't broadcast

Non-Controversial was published as a frontispiece in *The Phoenix*, a magazine published by the Literary Club at the University of Auckland College. The Art Editor was Leonard D. Morrison, one of the first New Zealand printmakers to create anti-war prints. His linocut, *To The Tune of the Devil's Attack*, 1932, (Fig. 19), for example, presented a soldier being bayoneted while attacking an enemy. The flexibility of the linocut allowed Morrison to use Champ's technique of crudely carving the title into the work itself. This anti-militaristic print was quite at odds with the jingoism that had prevailed in New Zealand since the outbreak of World War One.



Fig. 19. Leonard D. Morrison, *To the Tune of The Devil's Attack*, (linocut), 1932

Morrison's linocuts of Auckland urban scenes were also unusually bold, simplified and expressively cut. For example, *Silo*, (colour linocut), 1933, (Plate 61), depicted a grain store, a ubiquitous feature of every rural New Zealand town, as a soaring edifice set against a blood red sky. Disillusioned with life in New Zealand, Champ and Morrison left for England in 1934; however, Champ had an enduring influence on his student Arthur Thompson who also began creating prints of working-class life. Thompson's linocut, *Breadline*, 1932, (Plate 62), focussed on unemployed

anything that was controversial". Champ's wood-engraving was also a harbinger of future events. Fearing Scrimgeour would encourage listeners to vote Labour, the Coates Government instructed engineers from the Post & Telegraph Department to jam his broadcast on November 25 1935, two days before the General Election. Ibid, pp. 41-45.

workers waiting outside a relief centre for charitable help in Auckland. It was one of the most powerful images of the Depression created by a New Zealand artist and its simplified form and expressive execution demonstrated a maturity astonishing for a seventeen year old student. Thompson's family had endured considerable hardship, and the print echoed his personal experience of being a breadwinner during these lean years.³³ Thomson's etching, *Relief Workers*, c.1932, featured unemployed men working as labourers in return for relief allowance while [*Prison Cell*], (linocut), c.1932, (Fig. 20), was probably inspired by the jailing of unemployed rioters in Auckland in 1932.

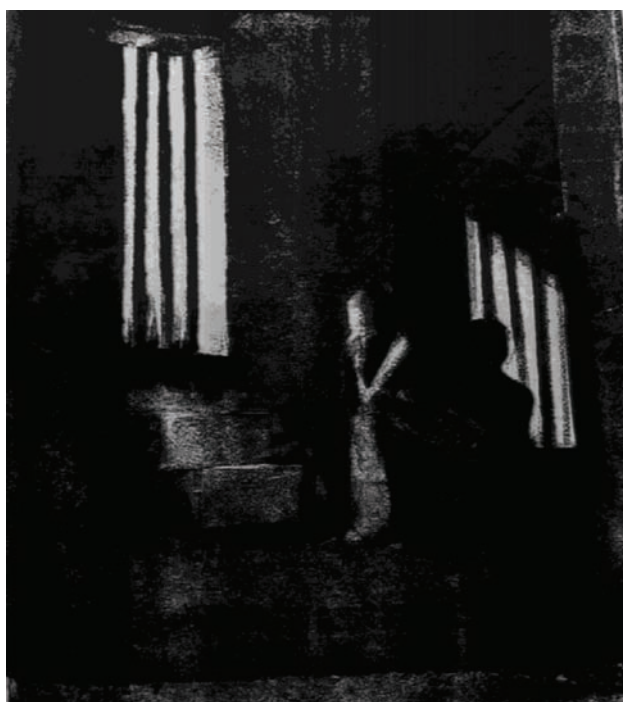


Fig. 20. Arthur Thompson, [*Prison Cell*], (linocut), c.1932
Private Collection, Auckland

By no means were all social realist prints didactic, and many simply focussed on scenes of everyday life. Thompson's etching, *Houses and Washing*, 1935, (Plate 63), presented the backyards of a row of inner-city Auckland weatherboard houses, complete with laundry hanging out to dry, a scene most art societies would not have considered suitable as fine art subject matter. Similarly, [*Lime Kilns Tower, Warkworth*], (etching), 1934, (Plate 64), was one of a series of prints of the industrial plant at Warkworth; unusually sparse and architectonic in execution, these drew attention to the geometry of

³³ Interview with Arthur Thompson's daughter, Mrs Jane Ellis, 23 November 2005.

the buildings.³⁴ Another powerful industrial landscape was Herbert Tornquist's wood-engraving, *Sunday at the Quarry*, c.1939, (Plate 65). Taking a most unconventional viewpoint, it depicted a cavernous quarry from the precarious position of a tiny ledge, and the brooding atmosphere of the scene was heightened by heavy black inking. This work was included in a joint exhibition of prints by Tornquist and Gilbert Meadows in 1939, and a reviewer from *Art In New Zealand* noted, "White line engravings, *Granite Quarry* and *Sunday at the Quarry* by Herbert Tornquist, are particularly well designed and executed...."³⁵ Tornquist trained at the Chicago Institute of Fine Arts before returning to Auckland in 1918 to establish himself as a portrait photographer. He joined the Quoin Club and, even after its demise, he and Meadows continued meeting with Thomas Gulliver daily. During these lunchtime sessions Gulliver taught them how to create wood-engravings and woodcuts.³⁶

Outside Auckland, many other printmakers who believed that art should be "an index of life" rather than an "escape from the crudities of existence",³⁷ belonged to the Christchurch-based New Zealand Society of Artists. Established in July 1933, its members included younger staff of the Canterbury School of Art and recent graduates dissatisfied with the conservatism of the School, and the Canterbury Society of Arts.³⁸ Professor James Shelley was elected as President, La Trobe teachers Francis Shurrock and Roland Hipkins were Vice-Presidents, and the organising committee was made up entirely of former members of 'The Group', artists who had previously broken away from the Canterbury Society of Arts to pursue their interest in modern art. Several members of the New Zealand Society of Artists were also active in the Workers

³⁴ A student of Stephen Champ and Arnold Goodwin, Thompson left Elam in 1935 to begin working as a commercial artist at Carlton-Carruthers, an advertising company owned by Goodwin and Albert Hooper. Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *We Learnt To See. Elam's Rutland Group 1935-1958*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2004, p. 377.

³⁵ "Art Notes Auckland", *Art In New Zealand*, December 1939, p. 118.

³⁶ Gilbert Meadows, "Some Random Notes on the Quoin Club 1916-1929 together with a word or two on a few of its members", handwritten manuscript, p. 11, NZ MS 802, Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

³⁷ Francis Shurrock, "Life: Art", *Tomorrow*, Vol II, No 18, March 18, 1936, p. 29.

³⁸ Basil Honour, "N.Z. Society of Artists", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol VI, No 1, September 1933, p. 24.

Educational Association, and through their radio broadcasts for the W.E.A. and articles for the left-wing newspaper, *Tomorrow*, Christopher Perkins and Francis Shurrock emerged as the public face of the Society.³⁹

Unlike their Auckland colleagues, however, their prints on social issues were not didactic. This was evident in a lithograph by Christopher Perkins entitled, *Wahine in Government Nurseries*, c.1932, (Plate 66). The employment of young Māori women was a very contentious racial issue, the Government had recently banned them from working in market gardens owned by Chinese or Indian men, and had established state run market gardens to offer the women alternative employment.

The indiscriminate intermingling of the lower types of the races - i.e., Maoris, Chinese, and Hindus - will, in the opinion of the Committee, have an effect that must eventually cause deterioration not only in the family and national life of the Maori race, but also in the national life of this country, by the introduction of a hybrid race....⁴⁰

Perkins was the only New Zealand artist to tackle the subject, but rather than taking a confrontational approach, his lithograph ostensibly presented the women only as archetypes of rural life. In this instance, however, drawing attention to the issue was itself a political act. Perkins exhibited *Wahine in Government Nurseries* alongside his drawing, *Rotorua Half Caste*, at the Society's *First General Exhibition* in 1933. Although such works appear innocuous by today's standards, it was clear that in their own time they were considered unsettling. At the opening of the exhibition, Professor Shelley declared it "represented the disturbing elements in the world of art today...."⁴¹

More tolerant of contentious subject matter than regional art societies, the Society also provided an environment which encouraged stylistic innovation. For

³⁹ Among the other printmakers it attracted were Gladys Anderson, Olivia Spencer Bower, Alfred Cook, Thomas McCormack, Alexander McLintock and Evelyn Page. Wellington members included Christopher Perkins, Roland Hipkins and Jenny Campbell. A Dunedin Branch was established in August 1934 with Russell Clark as President, Harry Vye Miller was Vice-President and J.D. Charlton Edgar as honorary secretary.

⁴⁰ New Zealand House of Representatives, *Report of the Committee on Employment of Maoris on Market Gardens, Appendices to the House of Representatives 1929*, Section G: Native Affairs, G-11, pp. 3-5.

⁴¹ "New Note Struck", *The Christchurch Times*, 27 October, 1933, np. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

example, Harry Vye Miller's colour linocut, *The Regent Theatre*, c.1932, (Plate 67), depicted filmgoers at Dunedin's newly-opened Regent Picture Theatre. The print displayed an interest in simplification of form, and also showed the influence of La Trobe teacher R.N. Field in its use of discordant colour. In 1934 Miller became Vice President of the Dunedin Branch of the New Zealand Society of Artists, and used his position to lobby for a greater understanding and acceptance of modern art.

Perhaps the most significant contribution the New Zealand Society of Artists made to printmaking was introducing the concept of the print as a democratic artform. A major objective of the Society was to foster an art of national identity, and one of the ways it intended to achieve this was by encouraging the general public and regional art galleries to collect contemporary New Zealand art.⁴² Given the country was in the grip of an economic depression this appeared to be an impossible goal, but the Society realised the affordability of prints made them ideally suited for the purpose. Prints were therefore included in all their exhibitions and visitors who could not afford works on display could arrange to make deferred payments or make a private postal bid to the artist concerned.⁴³ Members and subscribers received a free original print annually, the first being Alfred Cook's regionalist landscape, *Castle Hill*, (etching), c.1933, (see Plate 85).⁴⁴ The Society also purchased etchings, linocuts and wood-engravings created by its members to donate to public gallery collections.⁴⁵

In line with its policy of making art available to all, the Society considered allowing unemployed men from local relief work camps to view some of their exhibitions free of charge. Critic Winston Rhodes called the Society's proposition a laudable gesture, but suggested a free private view of a work camp may be of more

⁴² New Zealand Society of Artists (Inc), *Catalogue of Christchurch Exhibition*, 1934, p.17.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Its efforts to make original art affordable to the general public were similar to those of British printmaker Claude Flight who maintained that "Linoleum-cut colour prints could be sold, if only the interest in and the demand for them could be stimulated, at a price which is equivalent to that paid by the average man for his daily beer or his cinema ticket". Claude Flight, *Lino-Cuts, A Handbook of Linoleum-Cut Colour Printing*, London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1927, p. 4.

⁴⁵ *New Zealand Society of Artists, Rules and Constitution*, July 1933, *ibid*.

benefit to these “high-priests of culture”.⁴⁶ Even if a labourer from a Canterbury work camp had the leisure time and access to transportation required to attend such an exhibition, he would have found the prints on display were priced well beyond his means. Single men in rural work camps received 10 shillings per week for scrub-clearing and drainage work;⁴⁷ it would have taken several weeks of a labourer’s entire allowance to pay for Shurrock’s linocut *Saleday*, (*Hawarden, N. Canterbury*) which cost 2 guineas, or *Wahine in Government Nurseries* by Perkins which cost one guinea.⁴⁸ Imperfect though the New Zealand Society of Artists’ attempts to make art accessible to ordinary people may have been, they represented quite a contrast to the elitism of art societies whose exhibition openings remained formal events on the social calendar.

The positive support the New Zealand Society of Artists gave to contemporary printmakers was also completely at odds with the almost total lack of encouragement provided by most regional public galleries and art societies. While Auckland City Art Gallery had appointed Thomas Gulliver as Honorary Curator of Prints and fully supported his policy of purchasing and exhibiting contemporary New Zealand prints, public galleries in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin lacked print rooms, and when they did acquire a print, it was inevitably an etching by a Royal Academician from one of the frequent touring exhibitions organised by Anglophile art dealers E. Murray and Mary Fuller.⁴⁹ Rather than building up collections of New Zealand prints they preferred to follow the advice proffered by Governor-General Lord Bledisloe, that they should acquire works by established British artists as examples for artists here to emulate. “In an isolated country like this better standards can only be obtained by setting up for

⁴⁶ Winston Rhodes, “The Cult of Culture”, *Tomorrow*, Vol 1, No 3, 25 July 1934, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Married men like Gordon Tovey who worked on urban relief projects received 40 shillings. Unemployed women received no relief allowance. Registrar-General, *The New Zealand Official Year-Book*, Wellington: N.Z. Government Printer, 1933, p. 610.

⁴⁸ *Catalogue of First General Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Artists*, Christchurch: NZSOA, October 1933, pp. 8, 19. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

⁴⁹ “Minutes of Council Meeting, Canterbury Society of Arts, 21 June 1932”, p. 212. Christchurch Art Gallery Archives; and Peter Entwisle, *Treasures of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery*, Dunedin: The Gallery, 1990, p. 22.

imitation and admiration the highest achievements in the arts and crafts. If your people are to aim at the best they must know and appreciate the best”.⁵⁰

The majority of art societies were also reluctant to include prints in their annual exhibitions, and consigned them to occasional craft shows. For example, the Canterbury Society of Arts annual exhibition in 1932 contained 394 oils and watercolours, one sculpture and absolutely no etchings, woodcuts or linocuts.⁵¹ This was in spite of the fact that Gulliver had already demonstrated the emergence of a New Zealand school of printmaking by organising the country’s first national exhibition of works by twentieth-century printmakers, the *Loan Collection of Prints Representative of Graphic Art In New Zealand*, held at the Auckland City Art Gallery in August 1930.⁵² As *The Auckland Star* commented, the inclusion of 117 prints by 41 artists was an indication of the rising popularity of the graphic arts in this country.⁵³ For printmakers outside of the Auckland region, the New Zealand Society of Artists offered exhibition opportunities denied them elsewhere. Overburdened with an ambitious exhibition programme, however, and divided by differences about its plan to become a national organisation,⁵⁴ the Society ceased to function and deregistered in 1936.⁵⁵ Despite being short-lived, the New Zealand Society of Artists popularised the concept that ordinary people had a right to

⁵⁰ Lord C. B. Bledisloe, *The Proper Function and Scope of a National Art Gallery and Museum*, an address given at the laying of the foundation stone of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum, Wellington, 14 April 1934, p. 16. Ironically, Bledisloe seemed oblivious of the impact that expatriate New Zealand artists were having on British and French printmaking. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.

⁵¹ Criticus, “Canterbury Society of Arts Exhibition”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol IV, No 16, June 1932, p. 259.

⁵² Gulliver purchased so many contemporary New Zealand prints for the Gallery that he was able to mount regular *Exhibitions of Prints Acquired by the Art Gallery*. The Auckland Society of Arts also organized numerous print exhibitions including works by Arthur Hipwell 1932; T.V. Gulliver 1932; Ivy Copeland, 1932; Tennyson Green 1935; John Lysaght Moore 1935; Hilda Wiseman, Connie Lloyd and Dorothy Vallance Young, 1935; Trevor Lloyd Retrospective 1938; and Gilbert Meadows & Herbert Tornquist 1939.

⁵³ “Graphic Arts, New Zealand Prints. Loan Collection Exhibited”, *The Auckland Star*, 5 August 1930, p. 3. Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries.

⁵⁴ “Split in the Ranks of N.Z. Society of Artists”, *The Sun*, 9 March 1935, np. William Baverstock Papers, MB 51, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

⁵⁵ *The Group 1927-1977*, Catalogue of a Retrospective Exhibition, Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1977, p. 6.

enjoy and collect original art. A radical concept in its day, it was an ideal widely adopted by printmakers, and one that shaped their approach to artmaking for the next two decades.

Social realist prints largely disappeared after the Labour Government, elected in 1935, established an extensive welfare state;⁵⁶ and not even the arrival of Australian Communist printmaker Noel Counihan in Auckland in 1939 could keep the art of social comment alive.⁵⁷ The political printmakers of the 1930s remain virtually unknown as art historians have focussed almost exclusively on painters, to the detriment of those working in other media. According to Docking “no New Zealand school of social realists or commentators developed during the slump years,”⁵⁸ while Jonathan Smart makes no mention of them in his thesis on art and social comment in New Zealand (1982).⁵⁹ Similarly Gordon Brown ignores them, maintaining that the painters Lois White and William Reed were the first New Zealand artists to show interest in social or political issues.⁶⁰

3.2 Experimental Prints

Rachel Barrowman argues that while the Popular Front fostered political radicalism it encouraged aesthetic conservatism, with a commitment to left-wing politics resulting in the widespread adoption of documentary realism among New Zealand writers, filmmakers and dramatists during the 1930s.⁶¹ Although allegiance to left-wing politics encouraged printmakers to adopt social realism, it also acted as a

⁵⁶ It has been estimated that by 1939, the changes it introduced had resulted in New Zealanders having the highest level of real income per capita in the world. Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, revised edition, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2000, p. 286.

⁵⁷ Harry Tombs, “Noel Counihan Caricatures”, *Art in New Zealand*, Vol XII, No 2, December 1939, pp. 85-87.

⁵⁸ Gil Docking, p. 120.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Smart, “Art and Social Comment in New Zealand, 1930-1982”, M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1982, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁰ Gordon Brown, pp. 60-61.

⁶¹ Rachel Barrowman, *A Popular Vision, The Arts And The Left In New Zealand 1930-1950*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1991, pp. 22-25.

catalyst for creative experimentation. Artists demanding greater political freedom no longer felt constrained by the dictates of conservative art societies and public galleries, and innovative printmaking flourished in centres where left-wing activity was prevalent. Interest in modern printmaking was greatest at the Elam School of Art, which shared its premises with the Workers Educational Association theatre and library.⁶² Printmaker Arnold Goodwin ran the W.E.A. Drama Club, often assisted by Elam Director Archie Fisher and etching tutor Stephen Champ.⁶³ Goodwin involved Elam students in creating artwork for W.E.A. productions, Arthur Thompson's wood-engraved playbill for *Masses and Man*, 1934, (Fig. 21), was a particularly bold example.

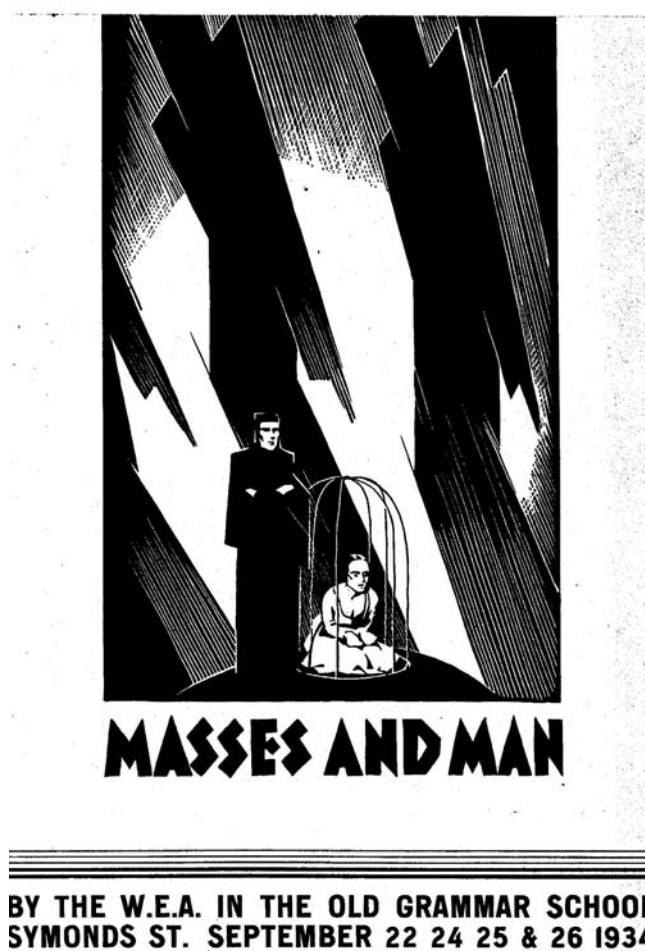


Fig. 21. Arthur Thompson, *Masses and Man*, W.E.A. Theatre Programme, (wood-engraving), 1934
Auckland City Libraries, NZMS 867

⁶² Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶³ Peter Harcourt, *A Dramatic Appearance: New Zealand Theatre 1920-1970*, Wellington: Methuen, 1978, pp. 54-55.

The W.E.A. Theatre changed its name to the People's Theatre in 1936, and dedicated itself to "the struggle against all forms of reaction, such as war, fascism, censorship, and other interferences with democratic rights".⁶⁴ When Goodwin was appointed Director of Design and Applied Art at Elam in 1936, he persuaded the newly elected Labour Government to sponsor a two-year course in Dramatic Art, and urged Auckland parents to enrol their children to help create "A drama that would play no small part in the workers fight for freedom and the shaping of the future of our country".⁶⁵ Goodwin taught students the fundamentals of stage design by having them create stage sets and backdrops in the form of prints; a precedent established by British wood-engraver and theatre designer Edward Gordon Craig.⁶⁶ Soon after his appointment, *Art In New Zealand* noted that prints by Goodwin's students tended to have a stage-like setting.⁶⁷

Valerie Lewis recalls that Goodwin was an inspirational teacher who instilled students with the necessity for simplicity in their artwork. He was particularly pleased with the starkness of her linocut *Composition*, 1936, (Plate 68), an abstract landscape intended to be used as a backdrop.⁶⁸ This starkness was evident in Gerald Mahon's lithograph, also entitled *Composition*, 1936, (Plate 69), which featured the shadowy figure of a woman walking through a man-made landscape of concrete walls. Even when creating prints inspired by historical dramas, Elam printmakers showed a surprising modernity. For example, Phyllis Crowley's [*Dante's Divine Comedy I*], (etching), c.1936, (Plate 70), was an unusually modern interpretation of a Renaissance subject. Known for her strong left-wing views, Crowley's etching demonstrated that an artist could be both politically radical and aesthetically innovative.

⁶⁴ Rachel Barrowman, pp. 178-183.

⁶⁵ Arnold Goodwin, "The Drama as a Career for our Children. An Open Letter to Members and Supporters of the Peoples Theatre", 1936, Arnold Goodwin Papers, Special Collections, NZMS 867, Box 8 Folder 5, Auckland City Libraries.

⁶⁶ Janet Leeper, *Edward Gordon Craig, Designs for the Theatre*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1948, p. 20.

⁶⁷ "Art Notes Auckland", *Art In New Zealand*, March 1936, p. 177.

⁶⁸ She remembers Goodwin examining this print and remarking "That's excellent, but don't let that go to your head!". Correspondence with Valerie Lewis, 11 August 2004.

Describing her experience as a student at Elam in the 1930s, Crowley with typical understatement commented, “I did a lot of etching and lithography with Mr Goodwin, learning thereby that I was much more of a craftsman than an artist”.⁶⁹ She did, however, receive critical attention for the lithographs and etchings she exhibited at the Rutland Group’s annual exhibition in 1937.⁷⁰ Her portrait, *Mary Johnson Reading*, (colour lithograph), c.1936, (Plate 71), was notable for its simple elegance and use of rich contrasting colours. Similarly, Arthur Thomson, another committed left-wing student, created one of the most modern lithographs by an Elam graduate during this period. His colour lithograph, [*Couple*], c.1936, (Plate 72), combined Art Deco elegance with discordant colouration. Goodwin’s encouragement of fine art lithography was most unusual; elsewhere it was still ‘tainted with trade’ and not widely adopted until the establishment of artist-run lithographic studios in the 1970s.⁷¹

Printmakers at Elam were the only contemporary New Zealand printmakers who could rely on their work being exhibited and purchased by their local public art gallery. This policy was begun under Thomas Gulliver and continued after his death in 1933 by Robert Donn, who succeeded him as Honorary Curator of Prints at Auckland City Art Gallery. Donn organised exhibitions of recent work by students of the Elam School of Art in 1934 and 1935, and the above prints by Lewis and Mahon, both entitled *Composition*, were among several purchased by the Gallery in 1936.⁷² Donn also instituted an additional feature, holding *Contrast Exhibitions* where prints acquired from Elam students were exhibited at the Gallery alongside those of renowned printmakers.

⁶⁹ Phyllis Crowley quoted in Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁷⁰ “Art Notes Auckland”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol X, No 2, December 1937, p. 112.

⁷¹ A. Kirker believes the interest in lithography displayed by Elam students was encouraged by the *Exhibition of Senefelder Club Lithographs*, which toured the country in 1935. A. Kirker, “Lithography in New Zealand”, P. Gilmour (ed.), *Lasting Impressions, Lithography as Art*, London: Alexandria Press, 1988, note 6: p. 378. However, this attracted little public interest.

⁷² Other student prints purchased by the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1936 included: Arthur Thompson, *Houses and Washing*, (etching), 1935; Clifford Murray, *Timber Yard*, (etching), 1935 and *Outhaul*, (lithograph), 1936; Bessie Christie, *Trees I*, (etching), 1935; Ida Eise, *Decoration*, (linocut), 1935; P. Crowley, *Etching Room*, (lithograph), 1936; Peter White, *Tugging a Scow*, (woodcut), 1935, *A Portrait Study*, (woodcut), 1935 and *An Old Barn*, (lithograph), 1936.

Outside Auckland, experimental printmaking flourished among students at Wellington Technical College taught by Jenny Campbell, Roland Hipkins and Frederick Ellis. Despite being Wellington-based, Campbell and Hipkins were active members of the New Zealand Society of Artists.⁷³ Avis Higgs began studying under Campbell in 1936, and created several linocuts of urban themes, including [*Wellington Buildings*], (linocut), 1937, (Plate 73),⁷⁴ which were notable for assigning precedence to pattern and design over literal representation. Her tutor, Jenny Campbell, was a graduate of the Edinburgh College of Art who, prior to World War One, had undertaken a travelling scholarship to Europe to study Post-Impressionism.⁷⁵ On her return she had been one of the first art teachers in Britain to introduce students to linocutting.⁷⁶ Tom Hall's [*Tugs, Wellington*], (linocut), 1939, (Fig. 22), was typical of the semi-abstract linocuts created by students taught by Campbell's husband Roland Hipkins.



Fig. 22. Tom Hall, [*Tugs, Wellington*], (linocut), 1939

⁷³ W.S. Wauchop, "Roland Hipkins and Jenny Campbell", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol I, No 9, June 1937, pp.178-180.

⁷⁴ Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *Avis Higgs, joie de vivre*, Napier: Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, 2000, p. 4.

⁷⁵ W. S. Wauchop, p.178.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

A more linear, Matissian style was evident in an etching by George Woods entitled *Nude*, c.1939, (Plate 74), which featured a voluptuous woman with her face turned away from the viewer. It was a shockingly sensual work by New Zealand standards, and one of the very few modern prints selected for inclusion in the *Centennial Exhibition of International and New Zealand Art* held in 1939. Reviewer Alison Grant bemoaned the complacency and lack of vision in most of the exhibition, but singled out George Woods's exhibits for praise, describing them as "beer and cheese after a surfeit of sponge cake".⁷⁷ Woods studied printmaking under Frederick Ellis at Wellington Technical College at night while working as a commercial artist for the Goldberg and Illott Advertising studios by day.⁷⁸

Student printmakers at the Canterbury College School of Art showed less enthusiasm for experimentation, possibly because of the conservatism of its Director Richard Wallwork. One of the very few modern prints created by a Canterbury student during this era was E. Marguerite Cotton's abstract linocut, *Presences in a Garden*, 1934, (Plate 75).⁷⁹ Such a modern print was of no interest to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, but it was reproduced as a frontispiece in *The Canterbury College Review*. Evelyn Page's linocut, *Winter Pattern*, 1932, (Plate 76), also showed considerable interest in a decorative style of abstraction. Page, a Canterbury College graduate, had studied under Wallwork, and her early etchings reflected his conservative influence. However she developed a decoratively modern style after leaving the School and was a founding member of both The Group and the New Zealand Society of Artists.

Leo Bensemann studied part-time at the Canterbury School of Art from 1932 to 1936 while working as a commercial artist;⁸⁰ and was one of the few Canterbury

⁷⁷ Alison Grant, "New Zealand Gallery. Do Our Artists Express Us?", *New Zealand Listener*, 15 December 1939, p. 30.

⁷⁸ Howard Wadman, "George Woods", *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, No 4, 1948, pp. 103-105.

⁷⁹ Cotton graduated with a Diploma in Art Crafts from Canterbury College School of Art in 1934. Canterbury College School of Art, "Diploma Examination Results 1934", School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury, SFA 1991.1, Item 59.

⁸⁰ Dennis Donovan, "Remembering Leo Bensemann", *Landfall*, No 157, March 1986, p. 76.

students who managed to develop a modern printmaking style under conservative tutor Archibald Nicoll. The influence of Aubrey Beardsley was apparent in Bensemann's wood-engraved portrait of Ray Gilbert, *Boy*, 1939, (Plate 77).⁸¹ Despite this, Bensemann insisted, "I am no follower of Beardsley, with all due respects to him, and I think there is a large difference of spirit in our works.... I do not possess a single reproduction of any of his drawings".⁸² *Boy* was engraved on a block made by T.N. Lawrence and Sons, London's best known supplier of boxwood, which Bensemann had been given as a gift.⁸³ Before beginning the portrait, Bensemann wrote to a friend, "It's the ideal stuff for engraving on but hellish expensive and unprocurable out here. It's a beautiful piece of wood and I'm almost too scared to touch it".⁸⁴

By all accounts printmaking should have thrived at the Dunedin School of Art where Gordon Tovey had been appointed Head of the School in 1937 and was transforming the curriculum by placing more emphasis on creative expression. However, as will be discussed later, Tovey did little to encourage printmaking and, after the resignations of La Trobe Teachers W.H. Allen and R.N. Field, only tutor J.D. Charlton Edgar maintained interest in the medium. Edgar was aware that his predecessors Allen and Field had revitalised the Dunedin School of Art, but felt they had done so at the expense of technical excellence.⁸⁵ Although a conservative etcher in his own right, Edgar was secretary of the Dunedin Branch of the New Zealand Society of Artists and encouraged experimentation among his printmaking students. Edgar's most promising printmaking student was Dick Seelye who developed a lyrically abstract style, creating linocuts such as *Moeraki Landscape*, 1938, (Plate 78). Edgar was particularly supportive of Seelye, organising a joint exhibition of their work in Dunedin

⁸¹ Peter Simpson (ed.), *Engravings on Wood by Leo Bensemann*, Auckland: Holloway Press, 2004, np.

⁸² Leo Bensemann, Letter to Pat Lawlor, 16 September 1937, Pat Lawlor Papers, Black-and-White-Artists, 80-063-011, Alexander Turnbull Archives.

⁸³ Peter Simpson, *ibid.*, np.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ A Canadian, Edgar had gained an M.A. in History and a Diploma in Education from the University of Edinburgh, and a Diploma in painting from the Edinburgh College of Art before arriving in Dunedin. Peter Entwisle, "Edgar, James Douglas Charlton, 1903-1976", *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Last Updated 31 July 2003. [URL:http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/](http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/)

in 1938. Seelye's *Moeraki Landscape* was included in the exhibition, and a reviewer from *Art In New Zealand* described his prints as vigorous and colourful.⁸⁶

It is clear from this discussion that while the politicisation of artists during the 1930s resulted in the appearance of social realist prints, it also generated greater questioning of previously accepted precepts, including aesthetic standards set by regional art societies and public galleries. Figurative social realist prints co-existed alongside experimental prints, with some artists adopting both approaches concurrently. The politicisation of the arts created a cultural climate where printmakers of all political persuasions enjoyed more aesthetic freedom than they had ever known before. The experimental prints created by student printmakers of the 1930s were without precedent in New Zealand art. It was not until the 1940s that painters began creating such abstract works and even then they were described by critic Edward Simpson as brave experiments. "Abstraction does not come easily to the New Zealand temperament: we are literal minded".⁸⁷

3.3 Regionalist Prints

While the Depression had been an economic disaster for New Zealanders, it also marked a significant stage in the country's coming of age. According to Gordon Brown, the emotional attachment many had previously felt towards Britain began to lessen as it became apparent that the country would have to find its own solution to the crisis.⁸⁸ In his landmark essay, *Some Aspects of N.Z. Art and Letters* (1934), A.R.D. Fairburn predicted that New Zealand's growing economic independence of Britain would lead to artistic independence as the country moved towards cultural maturity.⁸⁹ Evidence of this could be seen in the increasing numbers of printmakers creating regionalist prints of the

⁸⁶ "Art Notes: Dunedin", *Art In New Zealand*, December 1938, Vol XI, No 2, p. 97.

⁸⁷ Edward Simpson, "The Year's Painting in Perspective", *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, No 1, 1945, p. 60.

⁸⁸ Gordon Brown, pp. 51-52.

⁸⁹ A.R.D. Fairburn, "Some Aspects of N.Z. Art And Letters", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol VI, No 4, June 1934, pp. 213-214.

local landscape, indigenous flora and fauna and Māori. Many regionalist prints of the 1930s were notable for their Japonisme and simplicity, resulting from printmakers being galvanised by exhibitions of historical Japanese woodcuts, and their interest in exploring the potential of the linocut as a fine art medium.

3. 3.1. The Unspoiled Landscape

There was a discernable move away from urban and industrial scenes during this decade as La Trobe teachers continued to promote the unspoiled landscape as the foundation of the country's art of national identity. They found unexpected support in Lord Bledisloe, the Governor General, who while insistent that New Zealand artists should emulate British artists stylistically, advocated they should focus their attention on indigenous subject matter. To encourage this concept Bledisloe announced in 1931 that he would be offering an annual medal and prize, for "a picture which was deemed to be the most meritorious reproduction of New Zealand scenery."⁹⁰ Although intended as a prize for painters, it clearly signalled that the road to success no longer lay in industrial or urban scenes and the regional landscape soon became the all-consuming interest of printmakers. One of the most obvious differences between landscapes of the 1930s and those of earlier decades was that printmakers were now seeking out the unique features of the New Zealand landscape, rather than trying to anglicise it.

Herbert Tornquist was typical of printmakers who forsook industrial scenes for landscape imagery. During the 1930s he created a series of woodcuts and wood-engravings of Papa Aroha, depicting the bays, inlets, farms and trees of the region. Tornquist's approach to the landscape was revealed in a lecture he gave at the Annual Exhibition of the Auckland Society of Arts in 1935. Emphasising that art was not an imitation but an interpretation of nature, Tornquist declared representation to be irrelevant to the aesthetic value of a picture.⁹¹ *Parua Bay*, (woodcut), c.1939, (Plate 79), demonstrated how he reduced natural elements into formal patterns. The print's

⁹⁰ Auckland Society of Arts, "News of the Month", *Art Bulletin*, Vol 1, No 2, June 1931, p. 1. Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, MS 19, Box 9, Folder 5.

⁹¹ Herbert Tornquist, "Painting and Art. Necessary Elements. Address At Exhibition", *The New Zealand Herald*, 20 May 1935.

decorative simplicity displayed a debt to Japanese woodcuts, and was evidence of the enduring influence of Thomas Gulliver on Tornquist's printmaking style. The printmaker most closely associated with Tornquist was Gilbert Meadows, and his prints also showed the simplicity associated with the Japanese woodcut tradition.



Fig. 23. Gilbert Meadows, *Catalogue Cover Tornquist & Meadows Print Exhibition*, (woodcut), 1939

Meadows felt a close spiritual bond with the remote landscape around Pararahu Valley, and one of his many sketching trips to the area resulted in him creating *Breaker Bay*, (woodcut), 1930, (Plate 80).⁹² This depicted the massive land masses from an off-centre vantage point on the shoreline and was executed with utmost simplicity. His use of light against large areas of black was also particularly striking. Before beginning a new wood-engraving, he would work up an engraving plan using white paint on black paper to ascertain how best to achieve this effect.⁹³ Meadows, who enrolled at Elam School of Art in 1918, worked as a commercial artist under Arnold Goodwin at the

⁹² Interview with Ron Meadows, 4 August 2004.

⁹³ Ibid.

Carlton Studios before relocating to Ilott's Advertising in Wellington. During the 1930s he was employed as a designer by the Auckland firm of Clark & Matheson Ltd.⁹⁴

Meadows and Tornquist faced great difficulty in obtaining the expensive boxwood required for wood-engravings and woodcuts, but managed to obtain a quantity from *The Star* newspaper, which was upgrading its print-room and was no longer using small blocks for creating advertisements.⁹⁵ This enabled them to create a sufficient number of prints to mount a joint exhibition at the Auckland Society of Arts clubrooms in 1939, (Fig. 23). Tornquist exhibited thirty-four landscapes and two prints of quarries while Meadows exhibited eleven woodcuts and seven etchings of landscape and figurative studies.⁹⁶

The Japonisme displayed in prints by Tornquist and Meadows was also evident in those created by Connie Lloyd, Roland Hipkins and R.N. Field. Connie Lloyd's etching-aquatint, *Mount Wellington*, c.1939, (Plate 81), was notable for reducing the landscape to blocks of muted tones ranging from dark brown to light grey. The inclusion of a decorative tree as a framing device on the bottom left of the print gave it the air of a Japanese woodcut. Roland Hipkins made similar use of a large pohutukawa tree at the bottom left of his woodcut, *East Cape*, c.1939, (Plate 82), where he incorporated the natural grain of the woodblock to suggest the contours of the rocks and pattern of the waves breaking on the shore. A similar decorative simplicity characterised R.N. Field's *South Taieri*, (linocut), 1930, (Plate 83), where surface pattern and design took priority over representation.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, p. 342.

⁹⁵ Gilbert Meadows, p. 12.

⁹⁶ Some of the woodcuts by Meadows were actually plastic-engravings. Former colleague Allan Swinton remembers him engraving on sheets of perspex-like material. Interview with Allan Swinton, 12 December 2004. Ron Stenberg recalls Meadows preferred to engrave on industrial plastic as it would not buckle, whereas the poor quality boxwood obtained from *The Star* had a tendency to warp. Interview with Ron Stenberg, 2 April 2005.

⁹⁷ In 1932 R.N. Field persuaded the Otago Art Society to accept prints in its annual exhibitions. Otago Art Society Inc, "Minutes, 20 October 1932", p. 69, Hocken Library Archives. His success was short-lived, however, as the election of photographer George Chance as Chairman of the Society in 1933 resulted in photography again taking precedence in the Society's exhibitions.

When questioned about what motivated his indigenous landscapes, John Lysaght Moore replied that he was trying to capture “That austere, rather gloomy, and uninviting, to some people almost frightening, bush, which is at the same time throbbing with vitality and life-giving forces....”⁹⁸ Despite this, his landscape prints such as *Southern Alps*, (colour woodcut), 1939, (Plate 84), were usually joyful and colourful. The simplicity of its execution and use of soft-muted colours revealed Moore’s passion for Japanese woodcuts. Moore’s lyrical prints of the indigenous landscape became very well known throughout New Zealand as he created editions of up to 500 of some of his works, indicating that demand was substantial and he was attempting to make his prints as affordable as possible.

Moore’s focus on the indigenous landscape was exactly the kind of subject matter which South Island printmakers had tended to avoid, preferring to anglicise their landscapes so that they resembled ‘The Old Country’. It was a practice largely brought to an end by the influence of the New Zealand Society of Artists, which encouraged the creation of regionalist prints. Alfred Cook’s *Castle Hill*, (etching), c.1933, (Plate 85), for example, depicted the Canterbury landmark in all its windswept isolation. Delicately etched, it suggested the landscape rather than showing it in detail. Cook, an active member of the New Zealand Society of Artists, was a painter, printmaker, teacher and a commercial artist who had studied at the Canterbury School of Art from 1922 to 1927.⁹⁹ In comparison, *Nor’West*, (colour linocut), 1939, (Plate 86), by emerging printmaker Juliet Peter, featured a north-west west arch cloud formation above the Southern Alps, a sight very familiar to Canterbury residents. It showed a debt to Japanese woodcuts in its simplicity and sophisticated use of graduated colours. A student at Canterbury College School of Art, she was, along with Olivia Spencer Bower and Rita Angus, one of several women artists at the forefront of the Canterbury Regionalist movement.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ John Lysaght Moore quoted in A. J. Harrop, *My New Zealand*, London: Jarrolds Publishers Ltd, 1939, pp. 287-288.

⁹⁹ Alfred Cook later left for Sydney in 1934, where he subsequently joined his brother James as an art tutor at the East Sydney Technical School. David Angeloro, “Cook, Alfred Herbert”, *Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Painter-Etchers 1800-1940*, Australian Visual Arts Database, Documentation Pty Ltd, Discovery Media and David Angeloro, 1995, CD-Rom.

¹⁰⁰ After graduating, Juliet Peter worked under E. Mervyn Taylor as an illustrator for the Schools’ Publication Branch before studying lithography at the Hammersmith School of Art.

Towards the end of the decade, Wellington printmakers E. Mervyn Taylor and Kenneth W. Hassall broke away from the Japanese woodcut tradition and began exhibiting a stronger interest in contemporary British wood-engraving. Familiar with the work of Robert Gibbings, Gertrude Hermes, Agnes Miller Parker and Claire Leighton through imported books, Taylor and Hassall were able to study their wood-engravings at first hand when a collection of modern prints and drawings from the Contemporary Art Society toured the country in 1936.¹⁰¹ Taylor's earliest wood-engraving was *Dark Valley*, 1937, (Plate 87), a Wellington rural landscape featuring deeply scarred hills and a dirt track leading to a woolshed. His use of dramatic shafts of light and dark suggested a preoccupation with mood and atmosphere of place. *Dark Valley* was cut by Taylor using the jewellery-engraving tools he had acquired while an apprentice engraver at jewellers Worrall & Sons in Auckland, as he could not afford to send for prohibitively expensive woodcutting tools from Britain.¹⁰² Taylor turned this seeming disadvantage to his benefit by employing the engraving techniques he had learnt as a jeweller to create tones of intense subtlety. Initially Taylor had studied under Arthur Hipwell at Elam School of Art but by 1937 was working as a commercial artist at Carlton-Carruthers in Wellington and studying printmaking at night classes run by Frederick Ellis at Wellington Technical College.¹⁰³ Among Taylor's fellow printmaking students was Kenneth W. Hassall, an architectural draughtsman who specialised in landscapes of the Wellington region. Hassall's wood-engraving, *Pine Ridge*, 1937, (Plate 88), showed the influence of Gwen Raverat in the vigour of its cutting. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, Taylor and Hassall would play a leading role in the emergence of Neo-Romantic printmaking in New Zealand during the 1940s.

So closely was the landscape associated with national identity that being a conservationist was virtually becoming a responsibility of citizenship, and the conservation movement grew in strength throughout the decade, as a generation of New

She played a leading role in the New Zealand Print Council established in 1967. See Mary-Jane Duffy, *Outdoor People: a Tribute to Juliet Peter*, Wellington: Fernbank Studio, 2001.

¹⁰¹ Tony Mackle, Interview with Mrs Teddy Henderson (formerly Mrs E. M. Taylor), Te Papa Archives, CD Rom MU466/17.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Zealanders came to the fore that had been taught since infancy about the need to protect indigenous flora and fauna.

3.3.2 Flora & Fauna

During the 1920s, older artists like Trevor Lloyd had been convinced that they were recording the last vestiges of the indigenous environment, while emerging printmakers John Lysaght Moore and Hilda Wiseman adopted a more optimistic approach, believing they were creating prints of a growing heritage.¹⁰⁴ Now, however, younger printmakers with a more celebratory attitude towards the indigenous environment began to outnumber those who believed it was in danger of extinction. This became much more apparent after the death of Trevor Lloyd in 1937, when Moore and Wiseman assumed responsibility for drawing the public's attention to flora and fauna, and were joined in their task by Adele Younghusband.



Fig. 24. John L. Moore, *Pied Shags Building*, (woodcut), c.1930, Josephine Forbes Collection

In May 1935 Moore staged a solo exhibition at the Auckland Society of Arts clubrooms, showing woodcuts, drypoints and watercolours of indigenous trees, shrubs

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter Two, pp. 65-68.

and plants.¹⁰⁵ Moore's woodcuts were notable for their Art Deco boldness and simplicity. In *Clematis, Male*, (woodcut), c.1930, (Plate 89), for example, he depicted the flowers in extreme close-up, placing them against a black background which emphasised the shape of their petals.¹⁰⁶ Moore also used this technique to great effect in the equally decorative *Kowhai*, (woodcut), c.1930, (Plate 90). The influence of Japanese woodcuts on Moore's style was also apparent in the simplicity of his elegantly composed *Pied Shags Building*, (woodcut) c.1930, (Fig. 24).

Hilda Wiseman shared Moore's interest in flora and fauna, but unlike him did not restrict herself to indigenous subject matter alone. Wiseman's *Morning Glories*, 1937, (Plate 91), showed her experimenting with hand-coloured linocuts, in a simplified and decorative style and employing harmonious pastel shades. Among her other linocuts of this period were *N.Z. Cicada in Grass*, c.1930 and *New Zealand Pukeko*, 1930. The inclusion of "N.Z." or "New Zealand" in the titles of her prints suggests she was creating them for the overseas print market as well as local collectors. Adele Younghusband, who had studied art under Horace Moore-Jones in Hamilton, and later with George Woolley at Whangarei in the early 1930s,¹⁰⁷ also created several coloured linocuts of indigenous plants during this period including, *Puriri Trees*, *Yellow Kowhai* and *Puriri Berries*, all c.1933. Her Art Deco style colour linocut, *Tree Strawberry*, 1936, (Plate 92), was notable for the bold contrast between the red berries and black foliage of this introduced plant. Given her interest in linocutting, it is probable Younghusband offered printmaking classes at her private art school, the Hamilton School of Art, and at Hamilton Technical College where she was an art mistress.¹⁰⁸ Together with Ida Carey, she established the Waikato Society of Arts in 1934, and played a prominent role in organising its exhibitions.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ "Art Notes Auckland", *Art In New Zealand*, June 1935, pp. 219-220.

¹⁰⁶ Six of Moore's woodcuts were later selected to illustrate the New Zealand flora section of the *Oxford New Zealand Encyclopaedia* (1965). Laura Salt (ed.), *Oxford New Zealand Encyclopaedia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 130.

¹⁰⁷ M. M. Pearson, "Prominent Australian Artists Who Are New Zealanders", *The Weekly News*, December 1937, np. Artist's File, Whangarei Public Library.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Susan Skudder, *The First Fifty Years, 1934-1984: Waikato Society of Arts*, Hamilton: The Society, 1984, p. 6.

Art students of the 1930s were certainly kept very aware of their environmental responsibilities; students at the Dunedin School of Art for example, were being urged to help restore the bush-clad hills of the city by participating in a native shrub and tree replanting programme.¹¹⁰ At Wellington Technical College, Director R. Ridling lectured students on the loss of indigenous flora and fauna and asked art students to create posters highlighting the plight of native birds.¹¹¹ This led to students creating prints and posters of indigenous flora and fauna such as H. Westbrook, [*Nikau Palms*], (linocut), 1935 (Fig. 25) and N. Glendinning, *Protect Our Native Birds*, 1936 (Fig. 26).



Fig. 25. H. Westbrook, [*Nikau Palms*], (linocut), 1935



Fig. 26. Noel Glendinning, Poster, 1936

These initiatives had an enduring influence on Wellington Technical College students E. Mervyn Taylor and Kenneth W. Hassall, who would create prints during the 1940s celebrating the environment and highlighting the need for its protection.

¹¹⁰ "Arbor Day Visitor", *King Edward Technical College Magazine*, 1937, p. 12. Hocken Library Archives.

¹¹¹ R. Ridling, "Arbor Day and the Importance of Afforestation", *Wellington Technical College Review*, 1934, pp. 5-6. Wellington High School Library.

3.3.3 Māori

Christopher Perkins was one of the first twentieth-century printmakers to realistically depict contemporary Māori life. In 1932 he left Wellington Technical College for Rotorua, where he created a series of prints, paintings and drawings of Māori, including *Ohinemutu*, (lithograph), c.1932, (Plate 93), which was based on his studies of a settlement on the edge of Lake Rotorua.¹¹² Although somewhat awkwardly executed, this lithograph offered a complete contrast to prints by Stuart Peterson and Trevor Lloyd, where elderly Māori in traditional attire were presented as emblems of a dying race. Perkins was known to have used his lithographs as studies for paintings, and he later created an oil painting entitled *Ohinemutu*, which was devoid of people.¹¹³

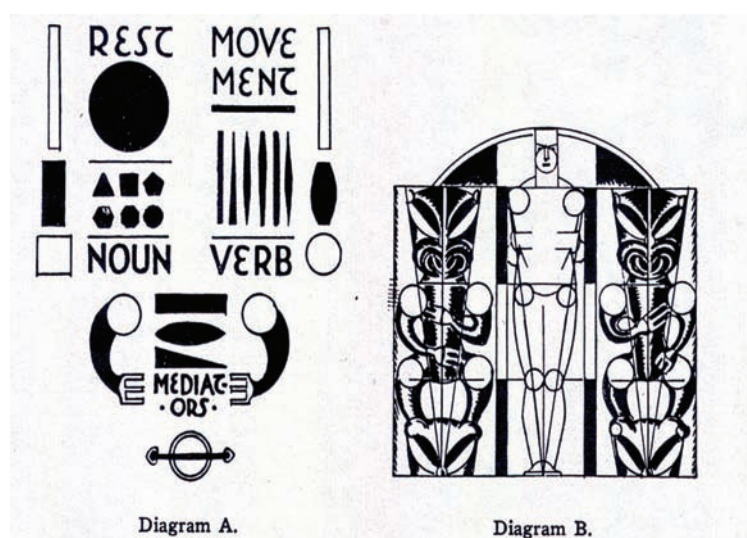


Fig. 27. Kenneth Ballantyne, Extract from “Notes on Maori Art”, 1930

Similarly, printmaker Kenneth Ballantyne was the only artist known to have made an in-depth study of Māori art and its relationship to modern art during this period. In an article entitled “Notes on Maori Art” he used Kandinsky’s *The Art of Spiritual Harmony* as a basis for analysing Māori carvings, and concluded that the ‘severe geometrical base’ of Māori art linked it to Egyptian, Assyrian, Indian and

¹¹² Leonard Bell, *The Maori in European Art*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed Ltd, 1980, p. 119.

¹¹³ Gordon Brown & Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting, 1939-1980*, Auckland: Collins, 1982, p. 128.

Pacific art.¹¹⁴ He also created a visual grammar, which showed how circles and triangles were used repeatedly to depict each of the main figures in Māori myth and legend (Fig. 27). It is likely that Ballantyne's interest in Māori art had been encouraged by his former tutors, C.F. Goldie and Harry Linley Richardson. It would be another twenty years, however, before Avis Higgs and Gordon Walters responded to his theories by creating abstract works based on Māori imagery.

Few other printmakers showed any interest in Māori subjects, a fact that surprised Australian printmaker Margaret Preston when she visited New Zealand to study Māori art in 1930.¹¹⁵ Those who did, persisted in focussing on historical and mythological aspects of Māori life, but some at least took a more modern approach than their predecessors. For example, Lois White's linocut, *Maoris Cooking*, c.1933, (Plate 94), featured Māori women in traditional dress, cooking over a hot spring. This subject was so well known from Victorian postcards and posters that it was virtually a cliché, but the linocut was notable for the monumentality of the figures and its bold execution. White developed this printmaking style while studying at Elam School of Art from 1923 to 1927.¹¹⁶ Gladys Anderson's [*Maori Myth*], (hand-tinted linocut), c.1930 (Plate 95), was a modern interpretation of the myth of Maui attacking the Sun. According to Māori mythology, Maui used lengths of twine to slow down the passage of the Sun God, thereby increasing the hours of daylight in each day.¹¹⁷ Anderson presented Maui as a stick-like figure struggling up the face of the Southern Alps, while the sun god was a fusion of a Māori carving and the well-known motif of an Art Deco-styled rising sun. This was part of a series of prints Anderson created based on Māori myths and the only one traced in a public collection.

¹¹⁴ K.M. Ballantyne, "Notes on Maori Art", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol III, No 9, September 1930, p. 39.

¹¹⁵ After her visit, Harry Tombs of *Art in New Zealand* stated it "makes one think that perhaps New Zealand artists... are missing a wonderful opportunity in not taking more interest in the art of their own natives". "Art Notes: Christchurch", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol III, No 9, September 1930, p. 70.

¹¹⁶ R. Fraser, "A Conversation with Lois White", *Art New Zealand*, No 18, Summer 1981, p. 36.

¹¹⁷ Margaret Orbell, *A Concise Encyclopaedia of Māori Myth and Legend*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1998, p. 84.

It was indicative of the social climate of the period that prints depicting Māori as figures of fun were acceptable. For example, the subject of Trevor Lloyd's *Matrimonial*, (etching), c.1930, (Plate 96), was an elderly Māori attempting to write an advertisement for a rich wife. Lloyd also created cartoons and advertisements which have been criticised by Leonard Bell for exploiting negative stereotypes, though he did concede that may have reflected the attitudes of the intended audience as much as those of the artist himself.¹¹⁸ Judging past generations by the precepts of our own period is in itself a contentious issue; it might be more constructive to simply recognise that Lloyd's prints were absolutely typical of his time.

The rather pedestrian nature of the above prints gave no hint that during the 1940s prints of powerful and beautiful archetypal Māori figures would dominate New Zealand's iconography of nationhood, a phenomenon that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

3.4 Expatriate Printmakers

The new-found confidence and maturity evident in New Zealand printmaking was also reflected among expatriate printmakers, some of whom were beginning to have an impact on the graphic arts of their adopted countries. James Boswell played a major role in establishing the Artists International Association in 1933, and became recognised as one of Britain's major twentieth-century satirists.¹¹⁹ John Buckland Wright joined William Hayter's avant-garde printmaking studio, Atelier 17, in Paris and was soon acting as his deputy.¹²⁰ Frank Weitzel's and Frederick Coventry's modern prints brought them critical attention from the British press. Others of note included May Smith, Stewart Bell MacLennan, Alexander McLintock, Maude Sherwood and Adele Younghusband. In addition, Canterbury College School of Art student Kathleen Browne, who was studying etching under Graham Sutherland, was elected a member of

¹¹⁸ Leonard Bell, pp. 124-125.

¹¹⁹ Richard Cork, "Look Back in Anger", *Sunday Times Magazine*, 21 November 1976, p. 83.

¹²⁰ S.W. Hayter, *About Prints*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 118.

the Senefelder Club.¹²¹ Ernest Heber Thompson became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers, and Kenneth Ballantyne, now a commercial artist in New York was admitted to the New York Society of Illustrators.¹²²

A protégé of Archie Fisher at Elam, Boswell had begun studying at the Royal College of Art in London in 1925. He found it tradition-bound and William Rothenstein expelled him for the poor quality of his work.¹²³ Boswell was introduced to expatriate New Zealand painter Fred Porter, a radical socialist, conscientious objector and friend of Walter Sickert.¹²⁴ Porter gave Boswell private tuition which resulted in him being readmitted to the Royal Academy, and by 1930 was so highly regarded as a printmaker that he was exhibiting both with the London Group and the Senefelder Club.¹²⁵ Shocked by the poverty he saw around him in London and worried about the rise of Fascism, Boswell joined the Communist Party, becoming a member of its Hogarth Group, artists who modelled their work on Hogarth's satirical style.¹²⁶ Boswell led a double life, during the day he was art director of the Asiatic Petroleum Company while at night he created lithographs and illustrations for the *Daily Worker* and other left-wing publications.¹²⁷ As Richard Cork observed "His art, poised halfway between the Expressionism of George Grosz and the cartoon journalism of David Low, was placed firmly at the services of political rebellion".¹²⁸

¹²¹ M. Kratochwil, *Kathleen Browne, Drawings and Paintings*, Edenbridge (Kent): Westerham Press Ltd, (199?), p. 22.

¹²² Peter Falk, *Who Was Who in American Art*, Madison: Sound View Press, 1999, p. 192.

¹²³ Herbert Roth, "James Boswell A New Zealand Artist in London", *Auckland City Art Gallery Quarterly*, No 65, December 1977, p. 4.

¹²⁴ Joyce Bellamy & John Saville (eds.), "Boswell, James Edward Buchanan (1906-71), Artist and Socialist", *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Vol 3, London: MacMillan, 1976, p. 15.

¹²⁵ Frances Carey & Antony Griffiths, *Avant-Garde British Printmaking 1914-1960*, London: British Museum Publications Ltd, 1990, p. 136.

¹²⁶ Lynda Morris & Robert Radford, *The Story of the AIA, Artists International Association 1933-1953*, Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1983, p. 23.

¹²⁷ William Feaver, *Boswell's London: Drawings by James Boswell Showing Changing London from the Thirties to the Fifties*, London: Wildwood House, 1978, introduction.

¹²⁸ Richard Cork, p. 83.

An early example of Boswell's powerful and disturbing art was provided with his *Fall of London Series*, 1933.¹²⁹ This contained eight lithographs created to illustrate a book by Frank McIlraith and Roy Connolly, in which they predicted Britain would be invaded by a German fascist dictatorship.¹³⁰ Boswell's lithographs, such as *The Fall of London: Through the City*, 1933, (Plate 97), showed central London descending into anarchy and chaos as fascist sympathisers fought with democratic forces amid well-known landmarks such as the Colosseum, London Bridge and the British Museum.¹³¹ It was characteristic of Boswell to quote from the past, and parallels existed between his *Fall of London Series* and Gustave Doré's illustrations for *London, A Pilgrimage*, (1872). Boswell's *The Fall of London: Through the City*, 1933, for example, recalled Doré's, *The New Zealander*, (engraving), 1872, (Fig. 28), which featured a New Zealand tourist of the future contemplating the ruins of London.



Fig. 28. Gustave Doré, *The New Zealander*, (engraving), 1872

Also reminiscent of Francisco de Goya's, *The Disaster of War Series*, Boswell's lithographs of London in ruins were among his most memorable works.

¹²⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter Four, Boswell renamed the prints as *The Spanish Civil War Series* when he donated them to Auckland Art Gallery in 1940.

¹³⁰ This was published in 1934 as *Invasion From the Air* without Boswell's illustrations. Birchall, Heather, *James Boswell: The Fall of London*, September 2003, Tate Gallery www.tate.org.uk

¹³¹ William Feaver, p. 5.

In 1933 Boswell, James Fritton, James Lucas, Misha Black and Cliff Rowe founded the Artists' International Association, an anti-war, anti-fascist organisation with Marxist leanings.¹³² At the A.I.A.'s first exhibition in 1934 Boswell exhibited *The Means Test, No 1*, (lithograph), 1934, (Plate 98), which depicted an unemployed man who had hung himself after facing a demeaning means test to qualify for financial aid. Boswell also satirised the British Establishment with lithographs such as *You Gotta Have Blue Blood*, 1934, *Empire Builders*, 1935 and *City Men*, 1938. His rather bleak view of everyday life was also reflected in *The Cinema*, (lithograph), 1939, (Plate 99), where the audience appeared more brainwashed than entertained. Already a lithographer of some distinction, Boswell practised his lithography at classes run by Fritton at the Central School of Arts and Crafts.¹³³ Also attending these classes was Edward Ardizzone,¹³⁴ which may account for the similarities between Ardizzone's and Boswell's prints, including their shared use of circular vignettes, shading and lighting and focus on ordinary people and places. However, where Ardizzone approached his subject matter with fond sentimentality, Boswell never flinched from portraying the gritty realities of everyday life.

Concerned about making his art affordable to ordinary people, Boswell would run off lithographs of his favourite drawings and sell them cheaply at protest marches the next day.¹³⁵ He was also involved in launching the A.I.A.'s Everyman Prints Scheme in 1939, which aimed to make original art more readily affordable to working people and provide employment for artists hard hit by the Depression.¹³⁶ Over fifty contemporary artists were persuaded to participate including Vanessa Bell, John Piper and Felix Topolski.¹³⁷ The scheme was an immediate success — the British Museum

¹³² Tony Rickaby, "Artists' International", *History Workshop*, No 6, Autumn 1988, p. 155.

¹³³ James Boswell, "The Senefelder Club", *The Studio*, Vol CXLVII No 732, March 1954, p. 68.

¹³⁴ Joyce Bellamy & John Saville, p. 15.

¹³⁵ Arnold Rattenbury, *James Boswell Artist Against Fascism*, Manchester: Manchester City Art Gallery, 1986, np.

¹³⁶ Percy Horton, "Art for Everyman", *The Studio*, Vol 119, Jan-June 1940, p. 162.

¹³⁷ Robin Garton, *British Printmakers 1855-1955*, Devizes: Garton & Co in association with Scolar Press, 1992, p. 318.

purchased works by 23 A.I.A. artists and over 2,875 prints were sold before the touring exhibition of Everyman Prints ended. Realising that many people were too intimidated to enter a dealer gallery to purchase a print, the A.I.A. also arranged to have Everyman Prints distributed and sold through nationwide outlets such as chains of department stores and tearooms.¹³⁸ This helped reinforce the concept of the print as a democratic artform, and popularised print collecting among people who would never have normally considered buying original art.

Boswell's flat and studio became the unofficial headquarters of former Elam students studying in London, including May Smith, Eric Lee-Johnson and A.R.D. Fairburn.¹³⁹ May Smith had studied under Archie Fisher at the same time as Boswell, and he encouraged her to follow Boswell's example by studying etching at the Royal College of Art. She enrolled there in 1928 and graduated with a diploma in etching and engraving in 1931.¹⁴⁰ Like Boswell, Smith was so disturbed by the poverty she saw around her that she too joined the Communist Party and the Artists' International Association.¹⁴¹ She participated in the *Artists Against Fascism Exhibition* organised by Boswell and the A.I.A. in 1935 and helped in other fundraising ventures to aid the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War.¹⁴² Smith's prints, however, were far more moderate than Boswell's. For example, *Children Drinking*, (etching), 1930, (Plate 100), demonstrated her quiet observation of the nuances of everyday life, and this was also apparent in her wood-engraving, *The Area*, 1931, (Plate 101), which featured an old woman standing on the stairwell behind a block of flats.

It would be harder to find a more complete contrast to Boswell and Smith's work than John Buckland Wright's classically erotic prints of the female nude, however, he too was destined to join forces with the Artists International Alliance. Typical of

¹³⁸ Lynda Morris & Robert Radford, p. 56.

¹³⁹ Lauris Edmond (ed.), *The Letters of A.R.D. Fairburn*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 38.

¹⁴⁰ May Smith Papers, Folder 1, MS-Papers-1999, Alexander Turnbull Library.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Northland Society of Arts, "May Smith – Painter", *Northland Society of Arts Newsletter*, No 19, June 1995, p. 1.

Wright's printmaking style was his wood-engraving, *Dolores*, 1933, (Plate 102), one of a series of wood-engravings he created to illustrate a privately printed edition of Algernon Swinburne's "profane hymn to perverse and cruel sensual delights."¹⁴³ Wright's printmaking style was sculptural in execution but shared the same sensual use of line seen in Eric Gill's engravings of the period. Born in Dunedin, Wright had given up training as an architect to study printmaking after seeing an exhibition of engraving at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and reading Edward Gordon Craig's book *Woodcuts and Some Words*.¹⁴⁴ Initially he worked in Belgium but by 1929 had settled in Paris where he studied copper engraving under Roger Lacouriere, developing a finely executed engraving style.¹⁴⁵ Wright's success was widely reported in this country, and when *The Studio* published an article about his wood-engravings in June 1934, it was republished in the very next issue of *Art In New Zealand*.¹⁴⁶

A major change in Wright's printmaking occurred in 1933 when he began studying at William Hayter's Atelier 17. The Atelier attracted a number of avant-garde artists including Brancusi, Picasso, Miro and Matisse, and the experience of working with them led to Wright experimenting with autonomous printmaking, and pioneering a style that could be described as Classical Surrealism.¹⁴⁷ An early example was *Baigneuse et Satyre No I*, 1934, (Plate 103), a copper-engraving in which he combined Surrealist free-form engraving with areas of soft-ground texture achieved by using

¹⁴³ Margaret Drabble (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5th Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 281. According to the artist's records at the British Museum, this book was privately printed and distributed by the artist in 1933. The copy in the British Museum was dedicated to Campbell Dodgson, Keeper of Prints. British Museum PRN: PPA39158.

¹⁴⁴ Wright was born in Dunedin in 1897 and his family relocated to England in 1905. He served in a Scottish Ambulance Unit with the French Army during World War I before studying history at Magdalen College, Oxford. Christopher Buckland Wright (ed.), *The Engravings of John Buckland Wright*, Aldershot: Ashgate Editions, 1990, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴⁵ Christopher Buckland Wright, *Surreal Times, The Abstract Engravings and Wartime Letters of John Buckland Wright*, Huddersfield, the Fleece Press, 2000, p. 13.

¹⁴⁶ "The Wood Engravings of John Buckland Wright", *The Studio*, Vol 107, Jan-June 1934, pp. 124-128 was reproduced in *Art In New Zealand*, Vol VII, No 1, September 1934, pp. 14-16.

¹⁴⁷ Christopher Buckland Wright, *John Buckland Wright, The Golden Cockerel Years*, London: Wolsley Fine Arts, 2001, p. 8.

crumpled paper and gauze.¹⁴⁸ Wright soon assumed a major role at Atelier 17, often acting as its Director during Hayter's frequent absences.¹⁴⁹ Wright contributed to a portfolio of prints by Atelier 17 artists, created to demonstrate their support for those opposing General Franco's fascist dictatorship in Spain.¹⁵⁰ While Boswell, Smith and Wright were fighting fascism, their aesthetic approach to art placed them in opposing camps. The ideological differences between them erupted when the *International Surrealist Exhibition* opened in London in June 1936.

The high society opening of the exhibition alienated the Artists International Association which declared "If Surrealism were revolutionary, it could be of use. But Surrealism is not revolutionary, because its lyricism is socially irresponsible".¹⁵¹ Boswell lashed out with a lithograph entitled *Surrealist Exhibition London 1936*, (Plate 104),¹⁵² where he depicted visitors to the exhibition as upper-class dilettantes. He underlined his contempt for them by contrasting their docility with an extract from Herbert Read's opening speech "Do not judge this movement too kindly... it is defiant, the desperate act of men too profoundly convinced of the rottenness of our civilisation to want to save a shred of its respectability".¹⁵³ Linking an image to a quotation in this satirical manner was a technique Hogarth had used to great effect, and one Boswell would have been familiar with as a member of the Communist Party's Hogarth Group of Artists. The aesthetic differences between the Surrealists and the A.I.A. were temporarily set aside when the Spanish Civil War broke out in August 1936. The Surrealists accepted an invitation to join the A.I.A. to show their solidarity in the struggle against fascism;¹⁵⁴ which led to Boswell, Smith and Wright participating in the A.I.A.'s 1937 exhibition. Shortly after this, Wright received a commission to illustrate

¹⁴⁸ Christopher Buckland Wright, *Surreal Times*, *ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁹ S. W. Hayter, p. 118.

¹⁵⁰ Other contributors included Picasso, Joan Miro, Andre Masson, Dala Husband and William Hayter. John Buckland Wright's Artist's File, British Museum.

¹⁵¹ Lynda Morris & Robert Radford, p. 41.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

John Keat's *Gedichte* with a series of wood-engravings, but discontinued work on it after discovering the book was to be presented to Adolph Hitler.¹⁵⁵ Though less radical than his peers, Wright still managed to incur the wrath of the German Government, and evaded arrest by the Gestapo by fleeing occupied Paris for London in 1939.¹⁵⁶

Frank Weitzel's art also demonstrated that not all left-wing printmakers chose to work in a didactic, social realist style. Weitzel's *Slum Street*, (linocut), c.1929-30, (Plate 105), for example, was more notable for its abstraction than social comment. Weitzel had begun to attract critical attention for his avant-garde linocuts and hand-printed textiles in Sydney, where Dorrit Black invited him to join 'The Group of Seven', and participate in its first exhibition at the Macquarie Galleries in 1930.¹⁵⁷ While Weitzel was recognised by fellow-artists, the public was slow to accept the modernity of his work and disillusioned, he relocated to London later that year.¹⁵⁸ Dorrit Black, a former student of Claude Flight at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, appears to have introduced Weitzel to the London printmaking scene by dispatching some of his linocuts to Flight prior to his arrival. Flight included these in the *Exhibition of British Linocuts* held at the Redfern Gallery in London in July 1930. Flight reported to Black, "I am very pleased to have Mr Weitzel's work for the show. I like it very much, it is original, strong, good of its kind & just the sort of work we want".¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ John Buckland Wright's Artist's File, British Museum.

¹⁵⁶ Christopher Buckland Wright, *Surreal Times*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁷ Jean Campbell, *Early Sydney Moderns*, Roseville, NSW, Craftsman House, 1988, p. 114.

¹⁵⁸ Lack of recognition for his art was not the only reason Weitzel had for wanting to leave Sydney. One of his most ardent supporters was Ethel Anderson, a highly placed figure in the conservative establishment, who believed that modern art like Weitzel's could provide a safeguard against the rising threat of Bolshevism. Humphrey McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass, The Emergence of Modernist Painting in Australia to 1944*, Sydney: Alternative Publishing Co-operative Ltd, 1979, pp. 65-66. Anderson's polemic placed Weitzel in an extremely awkward position - not only was he supportive of Communism, but his sister Hettie Weitzel had recently been elected leader of the Communist Party of Australia's Militant Women's Group. She was under surveillance by Australian security officials who had noted that since her arrival in Australia in 1922 "her activities and hatred of the existing order have become even more pronounced". Attorney-General's Department, Commonwealth of Australia, File on Miss Hedwig Weitzel (Mrs Hector Ross), National Archives of Australia, Item 337898.

¹⁵⁹ Claude Flight quoted in Stephen Coppel, *Claude Flight and His Followers: The Colour*

Flight promoted a printmaking style that blended elements of Cubism, Vorticism and Futurism, creating decoratively abstract linocuts that celebrated the speed and rhythm of modern life.¹⁶⁰ Under Flight's influence, Weitzel began creating multiple block prints which blazed with colour, such as *Vase of Flowers*, 1930, (Plate 106), and experimenting with figurative works like *Café*, 1930. Weitzel also contributed coloured linocuts to the *Third Exhibition of British Linocuts, 1931*, including *Design with Leaves*, *Design*, *Lilies* and *Café*.¹⁶¹ A reviewer from *The Times* described *Lilies* as being among those prints in the exhibition “that deserve mention”.¹⁶² David Garnett, editor of the Nonesuch Press commissioned Weitzel to sculpt heads of his wife and son, and introduced him to artists in his circle.¹⁶³ This led to Weitzel exhibiting his work with leading modernists Jacob Epstein, Duncan Grant, Paul Nash and John Nash, and gaining critical attention from Roger Fry. An ebullient Weitzel wrote to art critic Colin Simpson in Sydney, “Apart from meeting everyone of any importance among the writers and painters, I have shown in decent shows with Epstein and Duncan Grant and the Nashes.”¹⁶⁴ Weitzel was preparing for his first one-man show, when he died of tetanus on 22 February 1932.¹⁶⁵

His death, like the rest of his life, went unmentioned in New Zealand where public hostility towards the left-wing German Weitzel family was still prevalent. In contrast, Ethel Anderson wrote a memorial article on Weitzel's career which was

Linocut Movement Between the Wars, Parkes A.C.T., Australian National Gallery, 1992, p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ Gordon Samuel & Nicola Penny, *The Cutting Edge of Modernity, Linocuts of the Grosvenor School*, Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2002, p. 20.

¹⁶¹ Claude Flight, *British Lino-Cuts 1931*, Catalogue of an Exhibition held at the Redfern Gallery, London, July 1931, The Gallery, 1931.

¹⁶² “Linocuts”, *The Times*, 13 July 1931, p. 10.

¹⁶³ David Garnett, *The Familiar Faces: Being Volume Three of The Golden Echo*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1962, p. 121.

¹⁶⁴ Frank Weitzel, quoted in Colin Simpson, “Fame---Then Death. Weitzel And His Work. Artist, Sculptor”, *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 12 March 1932, p. 3. Artist's File, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

¹⁶⁵ David Garnett, p. 132.

published in *Art In Australia*,¹⁶⁶ and Dorrit Black staged a memorial exhibition at the Modern Art Centre in Sydney in June 1933, which featured many of his linocuts.¹⁶⁷ In Britain, Claude Flight paid tribute by including a linocut by Weitzel entitled *Carnival* in his book, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, published in 1934.¹⁶⁸ Rex Nan Kivell, the New Zealand born director of the Redfern Gallery, purchased several of Weitzel's linocuts and later gifted them to public art galleries in this country.¹⁶⁹

Frederick Coventry, who had studied printmaking under Iain Macnab at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, continued creating highly-charged Art Deco engravings during the 1930s. Typical was *Apples and Birds of Paradise*, c.1929-1930, (copper-engraving), (Plate 107), featuring a semi-demolished building, with the title referring to the patterns of wallpaper still visible on the walls. Print connoisseur Malcolm Salaman reproduced *Apples & Birds of Paradise* in *The Studio*, in an article in which he praised printmakers like Coventry for engaging with contemporary subject matter while other etchers continued to devote their energies to producing picturesque landscapes.¹⁷⁰ Innovative by British printmaking standards, Coventry's prints were unlike any architectural prints ever previously created by a New Zealand artist. In complete contrast, Coventry's *The Scrambling Man*, c.1930, (Plate 108), (copper-engraving), featured a male nude whose muscular energy was conveyed by the sharp and jagged lines delineating his form. This was among Coventry's entries for the Prix de Rome competition in 1930, and appeared in *The Studio*, in June 1931. Both prints were included in Coventry's solo exhibition of drawings and engravings at the Twenty One Gallery, London in February 1930. In his review of the exhibition the critic from

¹⁶⁶ Ethel Anderson, "From The Unstill'd Cyclades", *Art In Australia*, Third Series No 45, August 1932, pp. 35-39.

¹⁶⁷ John D. Moore, *Exhibition of the Latest Work of Frank Weitzel*, Sydney: Modern Art Centre, Sydney, 7 June 1933. Artist's File, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

¹⁶⁸ C. Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, London: Batsford, 1934, p. 64.

¹⁶⁹ Joanna Drayton speculates that expatriate painter Rhona Haszard may also have studied with Claude Flight at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art during this period. Joanna Drayton, *Rhona Haszard, An Experimental Expatriate New Zealand Artist*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2002, p. 76. However her monochromatic landscapes were the very antithesis of the brightly coloured, abstract prints of city life promoted by Claude Flight and created by Weitzel.

¹⁷⁰ Malcolm Salaman, "A Chat to the Print Lover", *The Studio*, Vol 100, 1930, p. 298.

The Times commented, “he excites interest by the downright simplicity of his methods”.¹⁷¹ In 1939 Coventry received a commission to paint a series of historical murals for the foyer of the Government Court at the Centennial Exhibition in Wellington.¹⁷² Sadly, if Coventry is remembered at all in New Zealand, it is for these mundane murals rather than for his energetic engravings.

Dunedin printmaker Stewart MacLennan studied lithography, wood-engraving, etching and painting at the Royal College of Art from 1935 to 1939, where his tutors included Britain's leading graphic artists, Paul and John Nash, Eric Ravilious, Edward Bawden and Edward McKnight Kauffer.¹⁷³ Under Paul Nash's influence, MacLennan developed a printmaking style which imbued everyday scenes and objects with a disturbing quality. His view of *Limehouse*, (woodcut), c.1939 (Fig. 29), a Thames-side dock scene for example, was quite surreal in execution. It featured a modern ship, inexplicably abandoned high and dry on the mudflats, with vine-like ropes trailing off the deck down towards its propeller. MacLennan had earlier studied under La Trobe teachers W H. Allen and R.N. Field at the Dunedin School of Art.¹⁷⁴ Among his fellow students in Dunedin had been Alexander McLintock, who was now studying for a doctorate at the University of London, and gaining critical recognition for his etchings, with several being exhibited at the New England Art Club and the Royal Academy in 1937.¹⁷⁵ Like MacLennan, McLintock also created prints based on the Limehouse docks area, including *Boatshed, Limehouse*, (etching), c.1940, (Fig. 30). McLintock's fascination with perspective, contrasting textures and interior and exterior light revealed his admiration for Whistler's Thames-side etchings of the 1850s.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ “Twenty-One Gallery”, *The Times*, 27 February 1930, p. 12.

¹⁷² Roger Blackley, “Centennial Exhibitions of Art”, William Renwick (ed.), *Creating A National Spirit, Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004, p. 223.

¹⁷³ Tony Mackle, “Stewart Bell MacLennan; The Man for the Job”, *The Journal of New Zealand Art History*, Vol 26, 2005, p. 56

¹⁷⁴ After graduating MacLennan had worked as a commercial artist with W.D. and H.O. Wills advertising agency in Dunedin from 1928 until 1935. Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ “Art Notes Dunedin”, *Art In New Zealand*, September 1937, Vol X, No 1, p. 51.

¹⁷⁶ David Bell, “Alexander Hare McLintock Printmaker”, *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*,

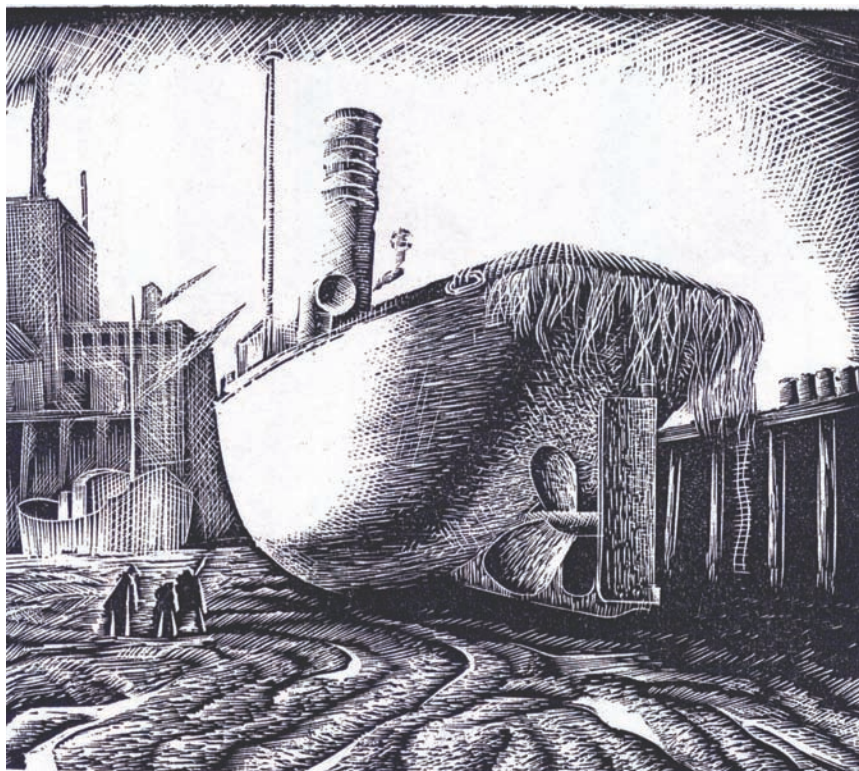


Fig. 29. Stewart MacLennan, *Limehouse*, (woodcut), c.1939



Fig. 30. Alexander McLintock, *Boatshed, Limehouse*, (etching), c.1940,
Christchurch Art Gallery, Presented by Mr F.A. Shurrock, 1960.

It is interesting to compare the modernity of MacLennan's woodcut, *Limehouse* with McLintock's nostalgic etching, *Boatshed, Limehouse*, for they demonstrate how experimental and traditional printmaking co-existed alongside one another throughout the 1930s. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, McLintock's taste for conservative printmaking took on added significance when he returned to New Zealand to take up the position of Director of the *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, which was staged in 1940, a role that gave him carte-blanche to select works for the country's first national exhibition of art.¹⁷⁷

Working in Australia during this decade were Maude Sherwood, Adele Younghusband and Helen Stewart.¹⁷⁸ Maude Sherwood is best known for her decorative linocuts and woodcuts of flowers but her aquatint, *The Dancer*, c.1932, (Plate 109), revealed she was also an astute observer of human nature. The print depicted a sloe-eyed young woman with an admirer, and was notable for its poster-like simplicity. Sherwood trained at Wellington Technical College during the 1890s under James Nairn and Mabel Hill, before joining the staff herself in 1904.¹⁷⁹ In 1912 she went to London and Paris and studied at Tudor Hart's studio and the Colarossi. Sherwood worked in Italy, France, Spain and North Africa until 1932, when she relocated to Sydney. She continued exhibiting prints with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts throughout this period, and became particularly well known for her intensely coloured prints of flowers. Her colour linocut, *Anemones*, 1932, for example was included in the Academy's 1932 annual exhibition, where it attracted praise for its luminosity.¹⁸⁰ Sherwood achieved this effect by using a technique she had perfected herself, printing some of the blocks twice

¹⁷⁷ Roger Blackley, "Centennial Exhibitions of Art", William Renwick (ed.), *ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁷⁸ Helen Stewart studied under Thea Proctor at the Sydney School of Art, Iain Macnab at the Grosvenor School in 1931 and Andre Lhote in Paris. Her solo exhibition at the Macquarie Gallery in Sydney in 1934 was opened by Ethel Anderson who compared the modernity of her work to that of Frank Weitzel. Stewart travelled to Japan and China in 1936 to further her study of woodcuts. Helen Stewart Papers, 82-427, Alexander Turnbull Library. None of her prints have been traced in public collections to date.

¹⁷⁹ Neil Roberts, *Maud Sherwood 1880-1956*, Christchurch: The Robert McDougall Art Gallery, c1980, np.

¹⁸⁰ "Academy Pictures, Water-Colours and Black and White", *The Dominion*, 4 June 1932, np. Artist's File Te Papa Archives.

to increase the density and depth of the colour.¹⁸¹ The cultural climate Sherwood worked in can be gauged from critic J.S. McDonald's comment about her art, "It is not only strong and unpeverted but extremely taking. It is candid to a degree rarely found in women's work, but it nevertheless has those feminine qualities which one admires, of sensitiveness to pattern and colour and the spirit of places".¹⁸²

Adele Younghusband had already established a reputation for her Art Deco linocuts before deciding to study modern art in Australia in 1936.¹⁸³ Initially she studied at the Railway Institute and the Newton School of Art in Sydney. She held a solo exhibition at the Lodestar Gallery in Sydney in 1937, and several works were purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.¹⁸⁴ Among the prints Younghusband created at this time was *Industry*, (colour linocut), 1937, (Plate 110), which was exceptional for its decorative approach to an industrial scene. It featured a factory with smoke from its stacks trailing in patterns through the sky, and repeated the pattern on the surface of the canal below the factory. Younghusband created the print from several blocks, and tied the layers together by overlaying the work with a black keyblock plate, a technique used by Japanese woodcut artists. Younghusband's artistic style was not seriously challenged until she moved to Melbourne in 1938 to study with George Bell, whose interest in contemporary printmaking was so great that he had temporarily given up teaching in 1935 to study at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art.¹⁸⁵

Under Bell's guidance, Younghusband developed an interest in both abstraction and surrealism,¹⁸⁶ and as *The Queue*, (linocut), 1938, (Plate 111) demonstrated, this led

¹⁸¹ Maude Sherwood, "Hand-written Notebook, Europe 1926-1932", Hocken Library Archives, 96-016 Folder 2.

¹⁸² J. S. MacDonald, "Maude Sherwood", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol VI, No 3, March 1934, p. 124.

¹⁸³ Dora Paytor, "Sydney Art Shows", *The BP Magazine*, Spring Number, 1 September 1937, p. 75. Adele Younghusband, Artist's File, Art Gallery of New South Wales Library.

¹⁸⁴ Nicola Green, "Adele Younghusband A Transitional Modernist", *Art New Zealand*, No 91, Winter 1999, p. 79.

¹⁸⁵ Stephen Coppel, p. 67.

¹⁸⁶ Arthur Hipwell, "Adele Younghusband - A New Zealand Surrealist", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XIV, No 2, December 1941, p. 83.

to the creation of Leger-like figures imbued with a disturbing detachedness. This was also apparent in *The Rehearsal*, (colour linocut), 1938, (Plate 112), featuring two female dancers standing in stylised poses, with their long streaming hair accentuating the motion of their arms. This linocut was probably inspired by the visits of Russian ballet companies to Australia between 1936 and 1939, including Colonel W. de Basil's Monte Carlo Russian Ballet (1936-1937), the Covent Garden Russian Ballet (1938-1939), and The Original Ballet Russe (1939-1940).¹⁸⁷ Their stage designs by Picasso, Miro and Gris had an enormous influence on local artists.¹⁸⁸

Experimentation among expatriate printmakers ended abruptly with the outbreak of World Two in 1939. Some joined the Allied war effort, and those who returned home found themselves isolated from contemporary developments in the graphic arts, and working in a state of virtual cultural quarantine. As Chapter Four will show, there was a widespread retreat from experimentation as printmakers increasingly embraced Neo-Romanticism, and focussed their attention on the enduring beauty of Nature.

3. 5 Bookplates

Commissions for bookplates peaked in the 1930s, a period considered to be the golden age of twentieth-century bookplate design in New Zealand. Interest in bookplate design and collecting was spurred on by the establishment of the New Zealand Ex Libris Society in Wellington in April 1930. Johannes Andersen, the Turnbull Collection Librarian, was elected President, and expatriate Percy Neville Barnett, provided the Society with its initial collection of plates.¹⁸⁹ The New Zealand Ex Libris Society's held its first exhibition in Wellington in May 1931,¹⁹⁰ and promoted this form of printmaking

¹⁸⁷ "Ballet Russes Australian Tours (1936-1940)", Australian Performing Arts (PROMT) Collection, National Library of Australia, <http://ilms.nla.gov.au>

¹⁸⁸ E. Chanin & S. Miller, *Degenerates and Perverts, the 1939 Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art*, Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press, 2005, pp 64-66.

¹⁸⁹ M. Ilott of the Ilott Advertising Agency, printmaker Stuart Peterson and journalist Pat Lawlor were also Wellington members of the Society. Shibli Bagarag (Pat Lawlor), *New Zealand Book-Plates, Illustrated History & Bibliography*, Wellington: Beltane Book Bureau, 1948, p. 2.

¹⁹⁰ "Book-Plates. What Are They?. Pictures in Miniature", *The Evening Post*, 16 June 1931, np.

by arranging regular exhibitions and publishing brochures of members' plates. The Japonisme evident in many prints of the decade also affected bookplate design. For example, E. Mervyn Taylor's plate *Margaret Taylor: Ex Libris*, (woodcut), 1935, (Plate 113), featured an elegant white heron, cut in the simple and delicate manner of a Japanese woodcut.

Hilda Wiseman also successfully fused an interest in Japonisme with a love of indigenous motifs in her bookplate, *Charles Fleming*, (colour linocut), 1935, (Plate 114), which she created for ornithologist and shell-collector Sir Charles Fleming. Printed in black and pale blue, it depicted a pied shag resting on driftwood, with a conch shell in the immediate foreground. The composition was enlivened by having the shell breaking through the frame of the bookplate. This, according to Siân Davis, was a recurrent device used by Wiseman.¹⁹¹ It would have been one she was familiar with due to her experience as a commercial artist, as it was a common feature of advertising material of the period. Wiseman hand-printed her linocut and woodcut plates on imported Japanese paper.¹⁹² Not all bookplate designs were so refined. Johannes Anderson encouraged the use of Māori motifs and indigenous flora and fauna. "New Zealand birds, flowers, plants, the Maori, might all be used with advantage to give a characteristic stamp to New Zealand plates".¹⁹³ Some artists took his advice to excessive lengths, leading to writer A. E. Shaw parodying them in his story, "Mr O'Shea Selects a Bookplate", published in *Art In New Zealand* in December 1930.¹⁹⁴

In addition to creating bookplates, Wiseman raised interest in the artform by arranging exhibitions, including one of her own extensive collection of international and

Evening Post Archive, Wellington Public Library.

¹⁹¹ Siân Davis, "Hilda Wiseman's Bookplates", Bachelor of Design dissertation, UNITEC Institute of Technology, Auckland, 1998, p. 20.

¹⁹² Louise Tilsley, "New Zealand's Foremost Book-Plate Artist. Hilda Wiseman's Fascinating Studio", *Sydney Morning Herald*, Women's Supplement, 5 October 1937, np. Artist's File, Art Gallery of New South Wales Library.

¹⁹³ Pat Lawlor (ed.), *Brochure No 1 of the N.Z. Ex-Libris Society*, Wellington: The Society, 1930, p. 15.

¹⁹⁴ A.E. Shaw, "Mr O'Shea Selects A Bookplate", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol III, No 10, December 1930, p. 135.

New Zealand bookplates, which was curated by Thomas Gulliver at the Auckland City Art Gallery in April 1930.¹⁹⁵ Wiseman was also Secretary of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Ex Libris Society established in 1930, which aimed “To develop the artistic character of bookplates”.¹⁹⁶ It popularised this form of printmaking by staging regular exhibitions in the Print Room of the Auckland City Art Gallery.¹⁹⁷

In Christchurch, Sir Joseph Kinsey was Vice President of the New Zealand Ex Libris Society but his efforts to establish a branch of the Ex Libris Society in the city failed due to lack of interest.¹⁹⁸ However, some innovative bookplates were created by Alfred Cook, Leo Bensemman and Francis Shurrock, including Shurrock's plate, *Rewi Alley: His Book*, (colour wood-engraving), 1935, (Plate 115).¹⁹⁹

3. 6 Conclusion

With the print enjoying more success as a fine art form than at any other time in New Zealand's history, it appeared that printmakers could look forward to even greater critical recognition. Reforms of the art curriculum begun in the late 1930s, however, threatened to undermine the new-found status of the print. Already a vociferous critic of the South Kensington system of art training, Gordon Tovey increased his attacks on its credibility after he was appointed Head of the Dunedin School of Art in 1937. Pointing to its origins as a nineteenth-century curriculum introduced to provide British adult students with vocational training, he questioned its relevance to twentieth-century New Zealand school children.²⁰⁰ In 1937 Tovey attended the New Education Fellowship

¹⁹⁵ “Art Notes Auckland”, *Art In New Zealand*, June 1930, pp. 286-287.

¹⁹⁶ Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *75 Years of Bookplates, Auckland Ex Libris Society 1930-2005*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2005, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ “Art Notes Auckland”, *Art In New Zealand*, December 1935, p. 115.

¹⁹⁸ P. Lawlor (ed.), *Brochure No 2 of the N.Z. Ex-Libris Society*, Wellington: The Society, 1933, np.

¹⁹⁹ Francis Shurrock, Letter to Harry Tombs about bookplate Shurrock designed for Rewi Alley, 9 November 1937, *Harry Tombs Papers*, MS-Papers-4530, Alexander Turnbull Library.

²⁰⁰ David Bell, “Art in Education, An Essay Celebrating One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Art Education at the Dunedin College of Education”, *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*,

Conference held in Wellington where he met C.E. Beeby, Director of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. At the conference Arthur Lismer promoted the educational theories of Franz Cizek, an Austrian educationalist who believed that rather than acquiring technical abilities in art, children should be encouraged to freely explore different art media with a view to encouraging their self-expression.²⁰¹ It was the very antithesis of printmaking practice in New Zealand.

Not only was Lismer an extraordinarily innovative art educator, but he had been a founding member of the Group of Seven, a society of Canadian artists who had rejected academic realism and dedicated themselves to building an art of national identity based on an expressionistic approach to painting.²⁰² Tovey and Beeby rapidly came to the conclusion that New Zealand's art of national identity would only develop if art training here underwent the same transformation as had occurred in Canada, where Lismer had incorporated Cizek's methods into the art curriculum. Tovey designed a new art curriculum incorporating Cizek's and Lismer's theories, and tested it out on school-age children who attended special classes at the Dunedin School of Art.²⁰³ Although linocutting featured in the new curriculum, Tovey regarded it only as a medium for encouraging self-expression in young children, and not as a fine artform for adults. The same phenomenon occurred in Britain where Cizek's theories had been widely implemented, leading Claude Flight to remark "We grown-up lino-cutters and printers have had to live down the common belief that lino-cuts, because they are children's form of expression, and comparatively easy in technique, are therefore a 'second-rate' art and when practised by grown-ups have not much value".²⁰⁴

Special Series No 5, 2000, p.25.

²⁰¹ Arthur Lismer, "Art and Creative Education", A. Campbell (ed.), *Modern Trends in Education, The Proceedings of the New Education Fellowship Conference held in New Zealand in July 1937*, Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, 1938, pp. 225-230.

²⁰² Terry Fenton & Karen Wilkin, *Modern Painting in Canada*, Edmonton, Alberta: Hurtig Publishers, 1978, p. 13.

²⁰³ David Bell, p. 27.

²⁰⁴ Claude Flight quoted in Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, *ibid.*, p. 15.

While some critics decried Tovey's initiative, he was able to gain acceptance for his curriculum by presenting it as a vital step towards building an art of national identity.²⁰⁵ *The Exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Painting* held in Wellington in June 1938 lent weight to his argument by demonstrating how artists like Lismer had created a vigorous school of Canadian art based on a spontaneous, expressionistic approach to the landscape.²⁰⁶ Tovey would go on to reform the national art curriculum during the 1940s, introducing sweeping changes that would result in the demise of the print as a fine art.

Whereas printmakers at the beginning of the 1930s had been concerned with commenting on social issues, by 1939 their main preoccupation was the country's forthcoming Centennial Celebrations with politicians, writers and musicians keen to celebrate the emergence of a school of New Zealand art. Two major art exhibitions were planned: *The Centennial Exhibition of International and National Art*, 1939 and the *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, which was staged in 1940. The National Gallery in Wellington hosted *The Centennial Exhibition of International and National Art* which opened in 1939. This was a joint exhibition with New Zealand works selected by Council members of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, and an international section arranged by art dealer Mary Murray Fuller.²⁰⁷ Reflecting the conservative preferences of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts Council members, only 21 prints were included in the New Zealand section which consisted mainly of oil paintings and watercolours; few printmakers were represented and woodcuts and linocuts took a backseat to etching, the least favoured print medium of the period.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ G. Tovey, "The School of Art", *King Edward Technical College Magazine*, 1937, p. 24. Hocken Library Archives.

²⁰⁶ Roland Hipkins, "Exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Painting", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol X, No 4, June 1938, pp. 197-198.

²⁰⁷ The involvement of Fuller, a Wellington art dealer and council member of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, and the fact that the works would be on sale at the National Gallery led to accusations by Harry Tombs that she had misused her position, and that the Gallery was taking on a commercial role when its role was an educative one. Harry Tombs, "Our National Art Gallery As A Sales Organization", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XI, No 4, June 1939, pp. 180-183.

²⁰⁸ Printmakers represented included Alexander McLintock, E. Mervyn Taylor, George Woods, K. W. Hassall, Connie Lloyd, James Fitzgerald, Richard Wallwork, Lois White and John Lysaght Moore.

Artists throughout the country were concerned about the lack of contemporary New Zealand art included in the exhibition, and the New Zealand Society of Artists which had deregistered in 1936, re-established itself to stage a rival event.²⁰⁹ It's *Exhibition of Works by Contemporary New Zealand Artists*, 1939 contained 252 works, however only fifteen of these were prints. Printmakers represented were Connie Lloyd, Harry Tombs, Kenneth W. Hassall and George Woods. The lack of printmakers represented may have reflected the fact that the exhibition had been arranged at short notice as a protest, rather than being a properly scheduled event.

The concept of the democratic print may have lost some of its impetus, but the ideal that the general public had a right to enjoy the arts was one strongly endorsed during the 1940s by Labour Prime Minister Peter Fraser, and Joseph Heenan, Head of the Department of Internal Affairs.²¹⁰ Building on the patriotism fostered by the Centennial Celebrations, they introduced a programme of establishing national cultural institutions, with the dual aim of improving public access to the arts and encouraging a distinctive New Zealand cultural identity.²¹¹ Printmakers who would once have used their art to attack the Government now found themselves working in partnership with it to implement its cultural agenda.

²⁰⁹ The Society's President was Harry Tombs, Secretary Basil Honour, and committee members included Marcus King and Roland Hipkins.

²¹⁰ Rachel Barrowman, "Fraser, Heenan and Cultural Patronage", in Margaret Clark, (ed.), *Peter Fraser Master Politician*, Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1998, pp. 110.

²¹¹ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 2003, p. 421.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE 1940s: THE PATRIOTIC PRINT

“National identities are co-ordinated, often largely defined, by 'legends and landscapes'... they picture the nation”.¹

Cultural nationalism was the major force behind New Zealand printmaking of the 1940s, a nationalism encouraged by the country's entry into World War Two and fostered by the Centennial Celebrations of 1940. It was further intensified by the introduction of the *British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act* on 6 September 1948, an act which transformed the country's inhabitants from British subjects to New Zealand citizens.² The Government played a major role in building the nation's sense of identity, a process that consisted in generating positive concepts, the most important being that New Zealand was a beautiful, unspoiled land, “a safe haven a long way from the bad things in the rest of the world”.³ Printmakers responded to the turmoil of war and mood of cultural nationalism by rejecting experimentation and modern subject matter and seeking reassurance in the timeless beauty of Nature. Many gave up linocutting and woodcutting, media ideal for creating abstract and simplified images, and began creating Neo-Romantic wood-engravings of timeless landscapes, symbolic images of indigenous flora and fauna, and a pantheon of powerful archetypal Māori figures. These stood testament to Stephen Daniels' theory that national identities are often visually expressed through legends and landscapes, which are viewed as picturing a nation.⁴ Urban and industrial scenes disappeared almost entirely, prints of the war were rare and social comment considered unpatriotic. This flight from modernity was

¹ Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision, Landscape Imagery & National Identity in England & The United States*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1993, p. 5.

² Until 1948 New Zealanders had legally been classified as British citizens, but this legislation allowed them to travel on New Zealand passports for the first time. Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 172.

³ Claudia Bell, *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pakeha Identity*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996, pp. 10-39.

⁴ Stephen Daniels, p. 5.

not restricted to printmakers alone. While modern technology and design were welcomed as signs of progress during the 1940s, in the visual arts modernity was viewed with hostility;⁵ and even the advertising industry, which in previous decades had championed a decorative modernism, became a conservative force, deciding that the “extravagances of Art Deco illustration were not appropriate to the mood of austerity that came with the Second World War”.⁶

The outbreak of war interrupted the careers of numerous printmakers. Among those affected were Arthur Thompson and E. Mervyn Taylor whose etching skills resulted in them being drafted into the services as mapmakers, while Juliet Peter joined the Land Army. Dick Seelye, who had enlisted in 1938, was among the first to serve overseas but was captured in the early stages of the war and spent four years interred as a prisoner-of-war.⁷ With an entire generation of artists enlisted to help with the war effort, E. Mervyn Taylor had to abandon the Print Society he had established in 1940 to make original prints affordable to the general public.⁸ Reminiscent of the New Zealand Society of Artists’ attempts in the 1930s to launch the print as a democratic art medium, the Print Society survived for less than a year despite the strong support of Taylor’s colleagues George Woods, Russell Clark, Stewart MacLennan and Kenneth W. Hassall.⁹ In addition, printmaking materials were extremely hard to obtain and exhibition opportunities severely limited.

The determination of printmakers to create wood-engravings at a time when it was impossible to import the Turkish boxwood required for the purpose was indicative of their rejection of the machine age. No longer wishing to create simplified images

⁵ Gordon Brown, “The Pursuit of Modernism in the 1940s and early 1950s, Part 1”, *Art New Zealand*, No 30, Autumn 1984, p. 28.

⁶ Linda Tyler, “Aotearoa Art Deco: Graphic Design in New Zealand 1920-1940”, *Substance & Essence Art Deco*, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Winter Lecture Series 1997, Wellington: Friends of the Museum, 1997, p. 29.

⁷ Frederick Shewell, “The School of Art Dunedin”, Harry Tombs (ed.), *A Century of Art in Otago*, Wellington, Harry H. Tombs Ltd, 1947, p. 90.

⁸ Correspondence with Terence Taylor, 11 November 2004.

⁹ Ibid.

using linocuts and woodcuts, printmakers began creating Neo-Romantic wood-engravings of the landscape, flora and fauna and archetypal figures. Turkish boxwood was ideally suited for the purpose, its density and compactness allowed them to engrave highly-detailed images on its endgrain, and to create prints which had a tapestry-like appearance. Prior to the outbreak of the war, import control regulations had led to severe shortages of artists' materials,¹⁰ and once hostilities started the Minister of Customs placed a complete ban on their importation.¹¹ Printmakers resorted to experimenting with alternatives to Turkish boxwood, including Southland beech, sycamore, pear, persimmon and dog-wood. E. Mervyn Taylor and Stewart Maclellan favoured Southland beech while Leo Bensemman preferred to use pear wood. Neither of these woods was hard enough for the purpose, and more often than not, led to the printing of over-inked and slightly coarse looking prints. George Woods was among printmakers who used the scraper-board, an inexpensive commercial technique, to give his prints the appearance of being wood-engravings. Leo Bensemman and Denis Glover of the Caxton Press in Christchurch played a major role in popularising Neo-Romantic prints by publishing books of wood-engravings by E. Mervyn Taylor and Rona Dyer, and a special issue on wood-engraving, featuring prints by Leo Bensemman, Stewart Bell Maclellan and E. Mervyn Taylor.¹²

The scarcity of fine art papers provided additional problems for printmakers. Paper rationing was introduced in October 1939, a situation exacerbated when Japan entered the war and imports of fine printing paper ceased entirely.¹³ Finding it impossible to procure imported printing paper, E. Mervyn Taylor resorted to breaking up art books from second-hand bookshops to obtain the fine mulberry paper inserts bound in between the plates, and printed his wood-engravings on them.¹⁴ Many other

¹⁰ "Artists' Plight. Import Ban in Their Materials. Academy Petition", *The Dominion*, 25 May 1939, p. 93. National Art Gallery, Newspaper Clipping Books, MU000134, Te Papa Archives.

¹¹ A.E. J. Arts, *A History of the Canterbury Master Printers' Association*, Christchurch: Printing Industries Association, 1989, p. 43.

¹² Caxton Press, *Miscellany, Book VIII, Wood Engraving Number*, August 1946.

¹³ A.E. J. Arts, p. 43.

¹⁴ Tony Mackle, Interview with Mrs Teddy Henderson (formerly Mrs E. M. Taylor), Te Papa Archives, CD Rom MU466/17.

printmakers relied on existing supplies of New Zealand paper, which were quite unsuitable for fine art purposes. B.J. Ball [N.Z] Ltd could supply 'Imitation Art' printing paper, coated on one or both sides with china clay and size which gave the paper a very smooth finish. However this paper was designed for use with half-tone blocks only, and was prone to cracking and breaking.¹⁵

Compounding the difficulties faced by printmakers was the fact that the outbreak of war had severely limited exhibition opportunities, and they were forced to find alternative venues for bringing their work to public attention. The Wellington Central Library made a reading room available as exhibition space, and MacLennan, Woods, Hassall and Taylor regularly exhibited their prints there. The French Maid Coffee Bar in Lambton Quay, Wellington hosted print exhibitions by Harry Tombs, Nancy Bolton, Roy Cowan and Connie Lloyd.¹⁶ The Modern Bookshop, a co-operative venture with branches in most regional centres, also provided exhibition opportunities for printmakers, the Dunedin branch displaying etchings by Alexander McLintock. Harry Tombs, editor of *Art In New Zealand*, provided another forum by introducing a policy in 1942 of publishing more prints than ever before in the journal, "We have reflected that art is more than painting, and we have revised the basis and layout of our paper to admit more drawings, engravings and lithographs".¹⁷ Tombs also commissioned printmakers to create covers for the journal throughout the war years. After the war, Lady Mabel Annesley was among artists who exhibited prints at the newly opened Helen Hitchings Gallery in Wellington.¹⁸ Another new exhibition venue which welcomed printmakers was the Architectural Centre in Wellington, established in 1948 by E. Mervyn Taylor and architects Ernst Plischke and Gordon Wilson.

¹⁵ G. R. Hutcheson, "A Printing Trades Glossary", *Hints on Letterpress Printing*, Wellington: Hutcheson Bowman & Johnson Ltd, 1938, p. 2.

¹⁶ "Art Notes Wellington", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 15, No 2, December 1942, p. 20.

¹⁷ Harry Tombs, "Shall we go on publishing Art In New Zealand?", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 15, No 1, September 1942, p. 3.

¹⁸ Helen Hitchings, "Information about Some of the Artists included in An Exhibition of Original Prints From Wood and Lino by 35 New Zealand Artists", typescript, Helen Hitchings Papers, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Archives, NRAM X33.

4.1. The Impact of Cultural Nationalism on Printmaking

The mood of cultural nationalism which pervaded New Zealand printmaking during this decade was initiated by the staging of nationwide Centennial Celebrations in 1940, held to mark 100 years of Pakeha settlement.¹⁹ According to W.E. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs, the “once-dependent child was no longer an ‘infant country’ but a ‘virile son’, [and] the Centennial would mark its ‘coming of age’”.²⁰ The main event was the Centennial Exhibition and Fair held in Wellington, while around the country re-enactments of the arrival of the first settlers took place, in what was described as an organised pageant of nation-making.²¹ A sense of nationhood was also encouraged by the Department of Internal Affairs publishing landmark works including *Making New Zealand*, *The Centennial Survey*, and *The Dictionary of National Biography*. The Centennial Celebrations were “a deliberate act of propaganda” by the Government, designed to encourage a sense of national identity.²² As etcher Alexander McLintock observed, “Artists were building the nation just as much as any politician with his loud-sounding phrases”.²³ McLintock played a crucial role as Director of the *Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art* held in 1940, however, only 20 of the 355 works he selected for inclusion were prints.²⁴ The marginalisation of the print in “the most significant art exhibition ever shown in New Zealand”²⁵ set an unfortunate precedent,

¹⁹ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 2003, p. 361.

²⁰ William Renwick, (ed.), *Creating A National Spirit, Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004, p. 15.

²¹ James Cowan, *New Zealand's First Century: the Dominion's Scene and Story: the Pageant of Nation-Making*, Wellington: New Zealand Department of Tourist and Publicity, 1939.

²² Jock Phillips, “Afterword: Reading the 1940 Centennial”, William Renwick (ed.), *ibid.*, p. 272.

²³ Alexander McLintock quoted in “Appreciation of Art”, *The Evening Star*, 15 November 1940, p. 2. Special Collections, Dunedin Public Library.

²⁴ Printmakers represented were P. Bagnall, K. Ballantyne, W.F. Barraud, J. Boswell, W. Cooch, A. Goodwin, Trevor and Connie Lloyd, G. Meadows, D. Payne, F. Shurrock, E.M. Taylor, H. Tombs, R. Wallwork, E. Warner, H. Wiseman and G. Woods. Inexplicable omissions included T. Gulliver, L. Bensemman, F Coventry, S. MacLennan, J.L. Moore, H.L. Richardson, M. Smith, J.M. Thomasson, H. Tornquist, F. Weitzel and A. Younghusband.

²⁵ Harry Tombs, “New Zealand Art. Opening of the National Centennial Exhibition in

and calls into question the claim by Roger Blackley that McIntock's enterprise "commands respect for the range and quality of the works displayed".²⁶ Despite this, several printmakers went on to become household names through the widespread dissemination of their prints in journals, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, illustrated books, cards and calendars.

Not only were printmakers working in a climate of extreme cultural nationalism, but they were also operating in a state of virtual cultural quarantine, physically cut off from international art trends by the outbreak of World War Two. This isolation was exacerbated by the newly re-established New Zealand Society of Artists, which proposed banning the importation of artworks in an effort to induce public galleries to collect contemporary New Zealand art.²⁷ A survey of members held in 1941 revealed that 52% felt the availability of overseas art was not in the best interest of New Zealand art or artists, 33% felt the importation of overseas art should be prohibited and only 4% supported there being no restrictions on imported art.²⁸ Numerous printmakers were active members of the New Zealand Society of Artists: Vice Presidents included W.H. Allen, R.N. Field, H. Linley Richardson and Harry Tombs while Jenny Campbell, Frederick Ellis and Kenneth W. Hassall were council members.²⁹

If artists were opposed to the importation of foreign art they were equally adamant that European artists fleeing fascist regimes in Europe should not be offered sanctuary in New Zealand. While individual New Zealanders showed concern for the plight of those trying to flee Hitler's regime, the majority were more concerned about the prospect of foreign Jewish immigrants taking employment opportunities from

Dunedin", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XII, No 3, March 1940, p. 163.

²⁶ Roger Blackley, "Centennial Exhibitions of Art", William Renwick (ed.), *ibid.*, p. 230.

²⁷ Basil Honour, "The N.Z. Society of Artists", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 13, No 3, March 1941, p. 143.

²⁸ "Artists Organise to Aid War Effort", *N.Z. Listener*, Vol 4, No 100, 23 May 1941, p. 13.

²⁹ Among other members who were printmakers were Frederick Coventry, Ida Eise, Frederick Ellis, James Fitzgerald, Roland Hipkins, Arthur Hipwell, Connie Lloyd, John L. Moore, Nancy Parker, D. Payne, W.E. Rice, E. Mervyn Taylor, Hilda Wiseman and George Woods. *Report of The New Zealand Society of Artists, Inc, for the period ending 30 September 1941*. Aotearoa New Zealand Centre, Christchurch City Libraries.

locals.³⁰ The Government imposed strict vocational criteria for entrants, levying an entry fee of £200 on each arrival, demanding they had a New Zealand citizen who would agree to act as their guarantor, and an offer of a job from an employer.³¹ Consequently, New Zealand art was not invigorated by an influx of émigré artists,³² while refugee artists accepted in Britain, Australia and the USA introduced the concept that printmaking was an integral part of contemporary art practice. The only refugee artists with an interest in printmaking to arrive were Elisabeth Delbruck³³ and Frederick Ost,³⁴ who had a negligible impact on printmaking. In comparison, Australian printmaking benefited from the arrival of émigré artists of the stature of Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, a Bauhaus printmaker who had collaborated with Paul Klee.³⁵ Deported to Australia from Britain in 1940, Mack began teaching printmaking while still interred in an Australian detention camp.³⁶ As Roger Butler has demonstrated, a defining characteristic of émigré artists accepted in Australia was “a commitment to integrating art and life”, a concept “which collapsed hierarchical distinctions of

³⁰ Ann Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay, Refugees from Hitler in New Zealand 1936-46*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin Historical Branch, 1988, p. 22.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Gordon Brown, “The Pursuit of Modernism in the 1940s and Early 1950s, Part 2”, *Art New Zealand*, No 31, Winter 1984, p. 50.

³³ Delbruck, a German etcher and woodcut artist, had an extensive collection of her own prints and 300 reproductions of artworks. Her influence was mainly educational, she arranged touring exhibitions of her collection, giving lectures on the history of art. “Evolution of Art. German Visitor Has Unusual Collection”, *The Dominion*, 8 April 1939, np. National Art Gallery, Newspaper Clipping Books, MU000134, Te Papa Archives.

³⁴ Ost was a Czechoslovakian architect who contributed linocuts to the literary journals *Letters* and *Arena*. Leonard Bell, “A Series of Displacements: An Introduction to the Art of Frederick Ost”, *Art New Zealand*, No 86, Autumn 1998, p. 64.

³⁵ Magdalene Keaney, “Images of Displacement: Art from the internment camps”, Roger Butler (ed.), *The Europeans: Émigré Artists in Australia 1930-1960*, Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1997 pp. 87-89.

³⁶ Ibid.

media....”³⁷ This commitment originated from their knowledge of Russian Constructivism, the Wiener Werkstaette, de Stijl and the Bauhaus movements.³⁸

New Zealand printmakers, however, identified much more closely with the British Neo-Romantic Movement than with European modernism. Horrified by the outbreak of war, British Neo-Romanticists led by Paul Nash were attempting to find spiritual solace and the essence of national identity in the timeless spirit of the land.³⁹ The arrival in New Zealand of prominent British Neo-Romanticist printmakers, Mabel Annesley and Robert Gibbings, accentuated interest in Neo-Romantic printmaking. However, while New Zealand printmakers were certainly greatly influenced by British Neo-Romanticism, they used it as a basis for interpreting the landscape very much in their own terms. Their prints bore no relation to the ‘anglicised’ scenes created by earlier printmakers such as A.J. Rae and Richard Wallwork, who presented New Zealand as if it were a far flung county of England.

4.2 Prints of National Identity

There was a distinct retreat from contemporary regionalism towards timeless symbolic imagery during this decade. Printmakers deliberately avoided creating scenes of contemporary city life, industrial subjects and social comment, and even the very few prints of wartime subjects tended to present the conflict in positive terms. The most notable change in emphasis was in the depiction of the country’s indigenous people; no longer presented as emblems of a dying race, prints of young, beautiful and powerful archetypal Māori figures emerged as new symbols of identity in the country’s developing iconography of nationhood. The unspoiled landscape remained of paramount importance but it too was now infused with a new sense of symbolism. Stephen Daniels has shown how pastoral idylls such as Constable’s *Hay-wain* had long been regarded as encapsulating a sense of national identity in England, and were used as

³⁷ Roger Butler, Introduction, *The Europeans: Émigré Artists in Australia 1930-1960*, p. 8.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Alex Potts, “Constable Country between the Wars”, Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume III, National Fictions*, London; New York: Routledge, 1989, pp. 179-180.

part of the war effort as exemplars of a land worth dying to defend.⁴⁰ The landscape performed much the same role in New Zealand during the 1940s, providing reassuring images of a beautiful, bountiful homeland. So closely did New Zealanders relate to the landscape and its unique flora and fauna, that it was widely regarded as being the very core of their sense of national identity.⁴¹

4.2.1 A Green & Pleasant Land

Landscape prints created during this period were loaded with more than usual meaning, for as contemporary critic Edward Simpson noted, the New Zealand artist was no longer behaving like “a temporary sojourner in a strange land” but depicting the land with the spiritual intensity of one who felt that it belonged to him.⁴² The country printmakers depicted was a green and pleasant one, untroubled by the effects of war or blighted by industrialisation. For example, E. Mervyn Taylor’s wood-engraving, *Rhythm*, 1945, (Plate 116), reflected not only the pattern of tree trunks but emphasised the timeless rhythm of the seasons. To those whose lives had been disrupted by the outbreak of war, images of the enduring pattern of nature were profoundly reassuring as well as aesthetically pleasing. Until 1940, Taylor had engraved his prints using jewellery tools he had acquired as an apprentice jeweller; however the gift of professional wood-engraving tools from Roland Hipkins helped elevate his printmaking towards a new level of aesthetic excellence.⁴³ Taylor used the Japanese method of printing his works, laying paper over the inked block and rubbing it with a burnisher to achieve a delicate impression; lacking a burnisher, he used the back of a teaspoon.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Stephen Daniels, pp. 222-223.

⁴¹ Paul Star & Lynne Lochhead, “Children of the Burnt Bush. New Zealanders and the Indigenous Remnant, 1880-1930”, Eric Pawson & Tom Brooking (eds.), *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 131-132.

⁴² Edward Simpson, “The Year’s Painting in Perspective”, *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, No 1, 1945, p. 10.

⁴³ Tony Mackle, Interview with Mrs Teddy Henderson (formerly Mrs E. M. Taylor), *ibid*.

⁴⁴ “Teaspoon for Printing Press. Mervyn Taylor is Unconventional Engraver”, *New Zealand Listener*, Vol 15 No 376, 6 September 1946, p. 8.

Maurice Smith's linocut, *Lake Horowhenua*, 1944, (Fig. 31), provided a reassuring pastoral idyll, with sheep grazing contentedly under trees beside a placid lake. This was exactly the kind of work that G. Watson, President of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, was encouraging artists of the period to create, "It is in such times that hearts and minds torn and riven with great emotional and mental stresses, can find at least temporary tranquillity in the consideration of the beautiful...."⁴⁵ Smith did not exploit the potential of the linoblock to create flattened form, but instead used it to mimic the appearance of a wood-engraving by covering the entire surface with a variety of contrasting textures. Smith, a draughtsman by profession, exhibited at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts and his prints were regularly featured in *Art In New Zealand*. Even when he was focussing on contemporary city scenes such as *Houses, Brooklyn*, (wood-engraving), 1944 and *Eastbourne Ferry*, (woodcut), c.1949, he managed to evoke an atmosphere of serenity.

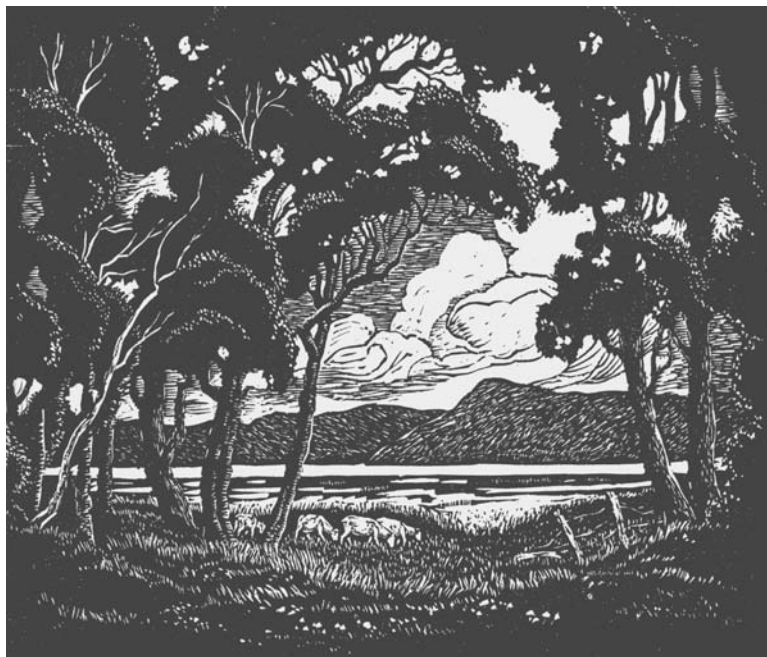


Fig. 31. Maurice Smith, *Lake Horowhenua*, (linocut), 1944

Kenneth W. Hassall's wood-engraving, *Gum Tree*, c.1943, (Plate 117), also conveyed a sense of an orderly countryside where man worked in complete accord with

⁴⁵ "Lamps of Culture Must Be Kept Burning. Art and The War", *The Evening Post*, 17 May 1941, np. National Art Gallery, Newspaper Clipping Books, MU000134, Te Papa Archives.

Nature. As Stephen Daniels noted about English pastorals, such images acted as “exemplars of moral order and aesthetic harmony” in a world beset by chaos.⁴⁶ Hassall’s more exuberant colour linocut, *Pine Silhouette*, c.1945, (Plate 118), a sunny summer scene, also reinforced the concept that New Zealand was a land worth fighting to defend. Hassall staged a solo exhibition of watercolours and prints at the Central Library in Wellington in 1946, and after criticising his paintings one reviewer remarked, “Mr Hassall has found a more congenial medium in the linocuts and wood-engravings, of which he is obviously a master”.⁴⁷

While Hassall’s focus on non-indigenous trees such as *Pinus radiata* and Australian Gum may seem to have been at odds with the intention of creating an art of national identity, it is necessary to try and see the New Zealand landscape through his eyes. Indigenous forests had been denuded by settlers to such an extent that by the 1920s the Government had found it necessary to introduce a policy of planting fast-growing exotics like *Pinus radiata* to avert resource exhaustion and ensure a continued wood supply for industry.⁴⁸ It was a policy that changed the appearance of the landscape so extensively that by 1940 many exotics were regarded an integral part of the New Zealand landscape. Indeed, Harry Tombs published Hassall’s wood-engraving, *Gum Tree*, on the front cover of *Art In New Zealand* in December 1943, as part of his policy of featuring prints that embodied a sense of national identity.

Rona Dyer’s wood-engraving, *The Raven*, c.1946, (Plate 119), suggested the powerful isolation and timeless spirit of the land, which led to Howard Wadman featuring it as a frontispiece in his *Second Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, 1946. The print’s rare combination of strong structural form and delicate engraving demonstrated that Dyer shared Paul Nash’s “ability to perceive presences in natural objects and to uncover symbolic or associative meanings in landscape...”⁴⁹ Although

⁴⁶ Stephen Daniels, p. 5.

⁴⁷ “Art Exhibition”, *The Evening Post*, 3 July 1946, np. Artist’s file, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

⁴⁸ Michael Roche, “The State as Conservationist, 1920-1960”, Eric Pawson & Tom Brooking (eds.), *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 183-184.

⁴⁹ Frances Spalding, *British Art Since 1900*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1986, p. 128.

unique in its own right, *The Raven* was also reminiscent of Canadian Modernist Emily Carr's use of totem-like birds in the landscape to suggest national symbolism. Dyer's wood-engraving, *Sheep*, c.1947, (Plate 120), was also infused with a sense of national symbolism. The rounded contours of the sheep's torsos were repeated in the contours of the hillocks they rested among and in the foliage of the overhead trees, and the overall impression given was that New Zealand truly was "God's Own" country. It epitomised Dyer's life-long printmaking philosophy; "I appreciate the work of those who look at the mundane and by their approach, find a way to make it extra".⁵⁰

The serenity and fertility of the New Zealand landscape was again suggested by Dyer's wood-engraving, *The Pool*, c.1948, (Fig. 32), which used the classical allegorical convention of representing a nation as an archetypal female figure surrounded by the indigenous flora of the country personified.



Fig. 32. Rona Dyer, *The Pool*, (wood-engraving), c.1948

⁵⁰ Rona Dyer quoted in George Bulleid, "A Multi-Talented Artist", *The Sun*, 17 April 1994, p. 11. Artist's File, Dunedin Public Library.

Dyer's wood-engravings were brought to national prominence by Denis Glover of the Caxton Press. A keen collector of her prints, he persuaded her to allow Leo Bensemann to publish a collection of her engravings entitled *Rona Dyer, Engravings On Wood*, 1948.⁵¹ This contained eighteen finely engraved plates, the majority of which depicted natural history subjects. Stylistically they all shared the same monumentality of form, and every part of the block was engraved using a variety of contrasting patterns, giving her prints a rich tapestry-like appearance. Dyer had begun studying at the Dunedin School of Art in 1942 and numbered Charlton Edgar, Robert Nettleton Field and Frederick Shewell among her tutors. She recalls that wood-engraving was not taught but classes were offered in linocutting and etching. She found the knowledge she acquired in drawing, design and composition in Field's life drawing and painting class and Shewell's commercial art class as invaluable to her development as a wood-engraver.⁵² Dyer insists that John Farleigh had the greatest influence on her development as a printmaker; she acquired a copy of his autobiographical textbook, *Graven Image*, in the early 1940s and taught herself to engrave by using it as a guide.⁵³

Another Dunedin School of Art graduate, Dick Seelye, also began creating landscapes that were imbued with a sense of spirit of place. After being released as a prisoner of war, Seelye enrolled at the Canterbury College School of Art in 1944 to complete a Diploma in Art Crafts.⁵⁴ Typical of his printmaking style was [*Riverbed*], (wood-engraving), c.1947, (Plate 121), where black clouds looming behind angular mountains emphasised the powerful desolation of the bush.⁵⁵ Far more idyllic was his wood-engraving, [*Country Road*], 1947, (Fig. 33), a decorative view of rural New

⁵¹ Linda Tyler, "Rona Dyer Muralist and Wood Engraver", 3 *Dunedin Designers*, Dunedin: The Hocken Library Gallery, 1999, p. 21-22.

⁵² Correspondence with Rona Dyer, 22 September 2004.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Canterbury College School of Art, *Diploma Examination Results 1948*, School of Fine Arts Library Archives, University of Canterbury, SFA 1991.1, Item 60.

⁵⁵ Seelye was Art Editor of the *Canterbury University College Review* and *Canterbury Lambs*, and frequently contributed wood-engravings to both publications. [*Riverbed*] was published as a frontispiece for the *Canterbury Lambs* while [*Country Road*] was reproduced in the new literary journal *Landfall*.

Zealand. Seelye's decision to specialise in printmaking at Canterbury College School of Art met with firm disapproval from Frederick Shewell, Director of the Dunedin School of Art who acidly commented "It is to be hoped that he will return to painting as soon as this is completed".⁵⁶ After completing his Diploma in Crafts, Seelye worked as an art advisor for Gordon Tovey before being appointed teacher of graphic design at Wellington Technical College in 1959.⁵⁷



Fig. 33. Dick Seelye, [*Country Road*], (wood-engraving), 1947

Printmakers working outside the main regional centres were also demonstrating a greater interest in Neo-Romantic landscapes, with Nelson attracting artists of the calibre of William Allen and Lady Mabel Annesley. Former La Trobe teacher, William Allen, was now art master at Nelson Boys' High School and had been elected President of the Nelson Suter Art Society. In wood-engravings such as [*Landscape*], c.1941, (Fig. 34), he managed to capture the grandeur and isolation of the mountainous Nelson region. According to Francis Shurrock, "Mr Allen's presence in Nelson is a stimulus to live thinking in the community at large about the pictorial arts, for with genial courage

⁵⁶ Frederick Shewell, "The School of Art Dunedin", Harry Tombs (ed.), *A Century of Art in Otago*, Wellington, Harry H. Tombs Ltd, 1947, p. 90.

⁵⁷ Ann Calhoun, *Simplicity and Splendour, The Canterbury Arts & Crafts Movement from 1882*, Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery, 2004, p. 54.

he stands firm for the experimenters, the pioneers of further possibilities in outlook and technique without whom we should all die a dull death.”⁵⁸



Fig. 34. W. H. Allen, [*Landscape*], (wood-engraving), c. 1941

British Neo-Romantic printmaker Lady Mabel Annesley arrived in Nelson in 1941, a war refugee of sorts, her Irish estate having been requisitioned by British troops and her new accommodation bombed during a German air-raid.⁵⁹ *Art In New Zealand* welcomed her arrival by inviting her to write an article on her career as a wood-engraver, and featured her wood-engraving, *Nelson*, c.1944, (Fig. 35), on the front cover of the March 1944 edition of the journal. Her printmaking style had always been notable for its expressionistic vigour and emphasis on pattern and design and it grew

⁵⁸ Francis Shurrock, “W.H. Allen”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 12, No 1, September 1940, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Constance Malleson, (ed.), *As The Sight Is Bent: an unfinished autobiography by Mabel M. Annesley*, London: The Museum Press, 1964, p. 100.

noticeably freer in execution as she sought to convey the beauty of the Nelson landscape. She wrote to a friend, “Until now, N.Z. has been to me, well, just a place to live in. Now a new door has opened. I've been into the Bush.”⁶⁰



Fig. 35. Mabel Annesley, *Nelson*, (wood-enchaving), c. 1944

Annesley had studied under Noel Rooke at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London and had been nominated by Robert Gibbings for election to the Society of Wood Engravers.⁶¹ She remained in New Zealand for fourteen years, during which time her prints became very well known through exposure in *Art In New Zealand*, and through her participation in regional art society exhibitions and solo exhibitions. Despite this, her influence was diffuse and she did not establish a school of printmaking. Annesley was actively involved with the Council of the Nelson Suter Art Society, but

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 117.

⁶¹ Mabel Annesley, “A Wood Engraver Looks Back”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 15, No 3, March 1943, p. 14.

although she had a staunch ally in its President, William Allen, some of her acquisitions of modern art for the Suter collection alarmed its more conservative members, and controversy surrounding these led to her decision to leave New Zealand in 1953.⁶²

As previously discussed, the major factors that caused British and New Zealand Neo-Romanticist printmakers to focus their attention on the landscape were a belief that national identity was embodied in the unspoiled landscape, concern that man-made development was destroying this heritage, and a revulsion of warfare. However, while British Neo-Romantic printmakers were primarily driven by reaction against the outbreak of yet another war, few New Zealand printmakers had any direct, personal experience of bombed out cities, churches and minefield-ridden coastlines. Instead, their interest in Neo-Romanticism stemmed from concern about the New Zealand landscape being ruined by unfettered development. For example, soil erosion had become a major issue of public concern, particularly after inappropriate farming and forestry methods had caused erosion leading to catastrophic flooding in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay in 1938.⁶³ The popular press was dominated with articles about the subject,⁶⁴ and just how concerned New Zealanders were about the issue can be gauged from the fact that when the New Zealand Army published a special issue of its *Bulletin* entitled "Defending Our Soil" in 1943, it was not referring to a possible military invasion by the Japanese but to the danger posed to New Zealand by soil erosion and deforestation.⁶⁵

Both Hassall and Taylor used withered trees as symbols of this man-made destruction, but their interpretations were quite different. Hassall's wood-engraving, *Tortured*, 1940, (Plate 122), depicted a withered, thorn-encrusted tree standing alone in a field, as symbol of a brutalised land. In comparison, Taylor's semi-abstract wood-

⁶² Tony Mackle, "Lady Mabel Annesley: A European Perspective in the Antipodes", *The Journal of New Zealand Art History*, Vol 24, 2003, pp. 73-74.

⁶³ David Young, *Our Islands, Ourselves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004, p. 138.

⁶⁴ Sanderson, E. V., "The Menace of Erosion. New Zealand's Greatest Problem", *New Zealand Magazine*, Vol 19, No 3, May-June 1940, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁵ "Defending Our Soil Issue", *N.Z. Services Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol 1, No 13, 14 June 1943. Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

engraving, *Ravaged Soil*, c.1947, (Plate 123), featured remnants of a tree trunk amid concrete blocks and churned up soil at a construction site. Both Taylor and Hassall had trained at Wellington Technical College, where great emphasis was placed on making students aware of the indigenous landscape and their responsibility to protect it.⁶⁶ Michael Dunn has shown how artists of the 1930s and 1940s, such as Christopher Perkins and Eric Lee-Johnson, adopted the dead tree theme for a number of reasons including: as a metaphor for a society in transition, readily identifiable regionalist imagery; to express concern about conservation issues, and to explore the Surrealist and Abstract potential the subject matter presented.⁶⁷ Perhaps underrating the longevity and influence of the environmental movement, he argues that awareness of conservation issues was the least of their motivations.⁶⁸ Dunn also describes Taylor's use of dead tree imagery in the 1950s as representing a dead end in New Zealand art.⁶⁹ Be that as it may, Taylor's wood-engraving, *Ravaged Soil*, c.1947, (Plate 123), displayed more modernity than Eric Lee-Johnson's paintings on the theme, such as *The Slain Tree*, (oil), 1945 (Fig. 36). It also again demonstrated how printmakers tended to experiment with differing styles concurrently.



Fig. 36. Eric Lee-Johnson, *The Slain Tree*, (oil), 1945

⁶⁶ R. Ridling, "Arbor day and the Importance of Afforestation", *Wellington Technical College Review*, 1934, pp. 5-6. Wellington High School Library.

⁶⁷ Michael Dunn, "Frozen Flame & Slain Tree, The Dead Tree Theme in New Zealand Art of the Thirties and Forties", *Art New Zealand*, Vol 13, 1979, pp. 40-45.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Although the majority of New Zealand printmakers had adopted a Neo-Romantic approach to the landscape, some, including Hilda Wiseman, were still clearly influenced by the Japanese woodcut tradition. Wiseman's colour linocut, *One Tree Hill*, c.1946, (Plate 124), featured a volcanic cone that dominated the Auckland landscape. It was a site significant to Māori, with the single tree on its summit commemorating the birth of renowned Ngati Awa Chief, Koroki.⁷⁰ During the Centennial Celebrations, arrangements were made to erect an obelisk on the summit to commemorate the arrival of Māori in New Zealand, and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. In her bright, sunny linocut, Wiseman focussed on the pleasant parkland and rooftops of houses at the bottom of the hill, as if inferring that the comfortable serenity was based on the historical events commemorated by the obelisk in the far distance.

Another contemporary landscape that resonated with national symbolism was William Sutton's colour linocut, *Road From Cromwell*, 1945, (Plate 125). Sutton emphasised the geometry of the Southern landscape by balancing its craggy masses against the long, straight, man-made road which transversed it, and the simplified powerful manner of its execution raised it above everyday and into the realm of the symbolic, suggesting man's recent intrusion into this remote environment. This was one of a series of colour linocuts created by Sutton during the 1940s, before he embarked upon a career as a regionalist painter. A graduate of the Canterbury College School of Art, Sutton had studied under Florence Akins, Richard Wallwork and Evelyn Page, who encouraged his interest in printmaking.

Integral to the intense interest New Zealand printmakers were displaying towards the indigenous landscape was their growing fascination with flora and fauna. Having already been adopted as markers of national identity on postage stamps, trademarks, currency and uniforms;⁷¹ indigenous flora and fauna began appearing in emblematic prints that bore little resemblance to the botanical prints of earlier decades.

⁷⁰ Russell Stone, "Auckland's Remembrance of Times Past", *Creating A National Spirit, Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004, p. 128.

⁷¹ Claudia Bell, pp. 37-38.

4.2.2 Emblematic Flora & Fauna

E. Mervyn Taylor was rapidly establishing himself as the country's most prominent printmaker of indigenous flora and fauna, creating prints that were avidly collected by a general public keen to acquire works that reflected New Zealand's burgeoning sense of national identity. Typical of Taylor's style was *Weta*, (wood-engraving), c.1946, (Plate 126). The insect was presented on a crumpled leaf almost as if it had been placed directly in front of the viewer, and the silken-engraving style revealed the influence of British printmaker Agnes Miller Parker whom Taylor greatly admired. It was engravings of this calibre that resulted in Roland Hipkins describing Taylor as the Bewick of the Dominion.⁷² *Weta* was featured on the front cover of the *New Zealand Listener*, and in *A Book of Wood Engravings by Mervyn Taylor*, published by Denis Glover at the Caxton Press in 1946. Taylor's wood-engravings of flora and fauna became a hallmark of other publications which he was associated with such as *Korero*, the Army Education and Welfare Service Bulletin, and the *School Journal*. Taylor's interest in indigenous flora and fauna also extended to extinct species. *Huia*, (*Nga Huia*), (Version 1), (wood-engraving), 1949, (Plate 127), for example, was based on drawings he had made from museum specimens.⁷³ Taylor presented the huia against a background tapestry of twigs and leaves, and his broader treatment of the subject reflected the fact that he had engraved it on Southland beech, a wood which lacked the compactness of Turkish boxwood, which was now impossible to import.⁷⁴

Taylor's friend, Stewart MacLennan, who had recently returned from studying in London, also began creating wood-engravings of flora and fauna, including *Flax Flower* and *Lizards*, both c.1940s (untraced). However, unlike Taylor he also turned his attention to introduced plants and even weeds. His wood-engraving, *Dandelion*, c.1940, (Plate 128) for example, demonstrated how he created prints with a tapestry-like

⁷² Roland Hipkins, "Contemporary Art in New Zealand", *The Studio, New Zealand Issue*, April 1948, p. 113.

⁷³ Douglas Horrell, "Natural Themes in the Wood Engravings of E. Mervyn Taylor", B.A. Hons Research Paper, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2001, np.

⁷⁴ E. Mervyn Taylor, *Engravings on Wood*, Wellington: Mermaid Press, 1957, p. 8.

appearance by engraving the entire block with contrasting patterns. The soft feathery heads of the dandelions were delineated in minuscule starburst cuts which contrasted with the long, sharp cuts of the stems and foliage, and great use was made of dark and light tones to emphasise the lushness of the leaves. Art critic 'Candide' denigrated most of the entries in the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts 1945 Annual Exhibition but singled out MacLennan's *Dandelion* for praise,⁷⁵ and in an unusual departure from its normal acquisitions policy, the Academy purchased this print for the National Gallery collection. Like Taylor, MacLennan's approach to printmaking was based on a deep seated respect for craft and technical excellence. "Craftsmanship seems to me fundamental to all the arts and crafts. It is not possible to think clearly in terms of form, design, or colour apart from the materials in which these things are to be rendered or the tools with which they will be worked".⁷⁶

Although MacLennan had clearly moved away from the Surrealism of his mentor Paul Nash, he still occasionally juxtaposed elements of the natural and the man-made in an unsettling manner. For example, in his wood-engraving, *Passion Flower*, c.1940, (Plate 129), he depicted the creeper of the passion flower as if it were a plastic telephone cord. Yet MacLennan still remained under the influence of British printmakers. In 1948 he was appointed Director of the National Gallery in Wellington, becoming the first fulltime director of a New Zealand public art gallery.⁷⁷ However, he did not use his position as an opportunity to build up a national print collection; instead under his directorship the Gallery continued purchasing English and European works in preference to contemporary New Zealand art.⁷⁸ To some extent this reflected MacLennan's personal taste, but a great deal could be attributed to the conservatism of

⁷⁵ Candide, "The N.Z. Academy An Open Letter to Most of the Artists", *The Arts In New Zealand*, Vol 17, No 2, February-March 1945, p. 39.

⁷⁶ S. B. MacLennan quoted in Howard Wadman, "Stewart MacLennan", *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, No 4, 1948, p. 28.

⁷⁷ The National Art Gallery, *Stewart Bell MacLennan The Complete Artist*, Wellington: The National Art Gallery, 1976, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Tony Mackle, "Stewart Bell MacLennan; The Man for the Job", *The Journal of New Zealand Art History*, Vol 26, 2005, p. 59.

the members of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts on the Committee of Management, who exerted considerable influence over the Gallery's acquisitions.⁷⁹

While Taylor and MacLennan's wood-engravings were heavily influenced by the example set by British wood-engravers such as Claire Leighton and Agnes Miller Parker, Rona Dyer's prints were quite unprecedented. Engraved in a monumental style, and in a myriad of textures and tones, they presented indigenous flora and fauna in a dense, lush landscape, in works that resonated with spirit of place. Her wood-engraving, *A Lizard*, 1946, (Plate 130), for example, depicted a native lizard at the foot of an old tree among unfurling ferns and fronds. She covered the woodblock with a variety of cuts to suggest the varying textures of the tree trunk, fern leaves, grasses, mosses and scaly skin of the lizard itself. After seeing Dyer's wood-engravings during a visit to Dunedin in 1948, renowned British printmaker Robert Gibbings took examples of her prints back with him to England and successfully nominated her for membership of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers.⁸⁰

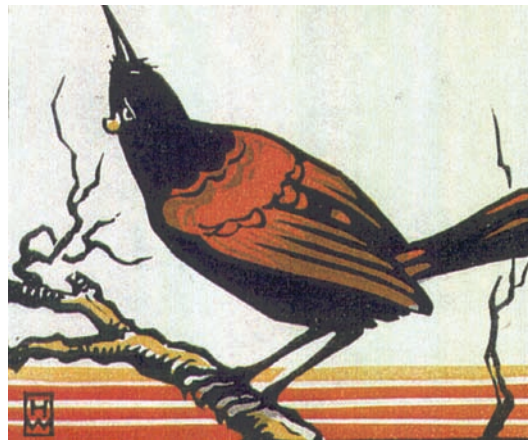


Fig. 37. Hilda Wiseman, *N.Z. Saddleback*, (colour linocut), 1942

Hilda Wiseman was one of the few printmakers to retain the simplified and flattened style of printmaking that had been so prevalent during the 1930s. Her colour linocut, *N.Z. Saddleback*, 1942, (Fig. 37), was simple and bold, and compositionally showed her enduring love of Japanese woodcuts. This was one of a series of twenty

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

⁸⁰ Correspondence with Rona Dyer, 26 August 2005.

colour linocuts Wiseman planned to create in 1942 to illustrate a book about New Zealand birds written by Johannes Anderson. Wiseman and Andersen's venture was announced in *Art In New Zealand* in December 1942, but due to wartime shortages the book was never published.⁸¹ Wiseman had begun experimenting with stencils and screenprinting during this period, and incorporated these techniques into her linocutting; a particularly striking example being *The Flower Spreads Its Wings*, c.1944, (Plate 131), which resembled a modern Japanese woodcut.

The arrival of Robert Gibbings, a prominent British Neo-Romantic printmaker and ardent conservationist also stimulated public demand for prints of flora and fauna. At the end of World War Two Gibbings was commissioned to write another book on Polynesian life and used New Zealand as a staging post for his journey to the Pacific. He was treated as a visiting dignitary and welcomed ashore by Walter Nash on behalf of the New Zealand Government when he arrived in September 1945.⁸² After completing eighteen months of travel in the Pacific, Gibbings spent six months living in Eastbourne near Wellington, working on the manuscript of *Over The Reefs*.⁸³ Public interest in his visit resulted in bookshops being full of his works such as *Lovely is the Lea*, making him one of the best known British wood-engravers in New Zealand.⁸⁴ Gibbings also involved himself in efforts to save the kiwi and wrote an account of the kiwi recovery programme in a monograph entitled *Kiwis in Captivity*, which was published by the Hawke's Bay Museum in 1947. His wood-engraving, *Kiwi*, (Fig. 38) dates from this period. He made several broadcasts during his stay, gave a public lecture on conservation issues at the University of Otago, and his activities were extensively

⁸¹ "Art Notes-Auckland", *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 15, No 2, December 1942, p. 3.

⁸² Martin Andrews, *The Life and Work of Robert Gibbings*, Bicester: Primrose Hill Press, 2003, p. 264.

⁸³ Eastbourne, a coastal suburb of Wellington, was home to a number of artists including printmakers John Lysaght Moore and Elisabeth Delbruck, writer Alan Mulgan and art critic Eric McCormick. Ann Beaglehole, *Eastbourne: A History of the Eastern Bays of Wellington Harbour*, Eastbourne, N.Z., Historical Society of Eastbourne, 2001, pp. 152.

⁸⁴ Letter from Joseph Heenan, Under Secretary of Internal Affairs, to Patience Empson, Gibbings's secretary, 11 June 1946. Correspondence - Robert Gibbings and Patience Empson, MS-Papers-1132-081, Alexander Turnbull Library Archives.

reported by the press.⁸⁵ Fascinated both by New Zealand's natural history and Māori mythology, Gibbings indicated that once he had completed *Over the Reefs*, his next book would be about the Wanganui River, its history, flora and fauna.⁸⁶ After becoming fully acquainted with New Zealand's quaint alcohol licensing laws, however, Gibbings decided he could not possibly proceed with the book.⁸⁷ Whether his inability to meet his normal alcohol requirements was merely a pretext or not, Gibbings returned to Britain in 1947.

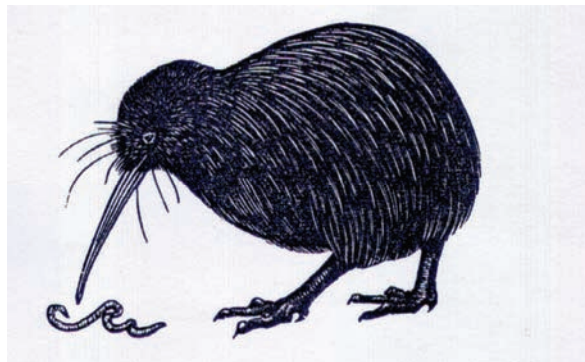


Fig. 38. Robert Gibbings, *Kiwi*, (wood-engraving), 1947

Although he spent less than a year here, Gibbings had an enduring influence on printmakers and the general public through his books, lectures and radio broadcasts. He met E. Mervyn Taylor, whose prints he praised with the comment, “There is nothing I can teach or show you that can improve your engravings”.⁸⁸ He also formed a lasting friendship with Russell Clark and it is highly likely he would have met with his colleagues George Woods and Kenneth W. Hassall who all shared his printmaking interests.⁸⁹ Even after his departure, the enduring popularity of Neo-Romantic wood-

⁸⁵ Joseph Heenan, Under Secretary of Internal Affairs, “Notes for Robert Gibbings’ Southern Tour”, typescript, September 1947. Ibid.

⁸⁶ “Robert Gibbings. Now in Wellington. Book on N.Z. Planned”, *The Evening Post*, 2 October 1945, np. National Art Gallery, Exhibition Files, MU000007, Te Papa Archives.

⁸⁷ Gibbings wrote to Joseph Heenan, Under Secretary of Internal Affairs, “I have been managing to get a little [whisky] now and again, but nothing like my normal requirements.... Unfortunately for me, whiskey is the only thing that is any good to me, nothing else has the same literary elevation”. Letter from Robert Gibbings to Joseph Heenan, 27 July 1947, MS-Papers-1132-081, Alexander Turnbull Library Archives.

⁸⁸ Correspondence with Terence Taylor, 11 November 2004.

⁸⁹ Russell Clark Papers, Christchurch Art Gallery Archives, CAG 3, Box 14, letters 1/89A,

engravings was demonstrated by public response to *The Wakefield Collection of Contemporary British Prints and Drawings* which toured the country in 1948. Auckland City Art City Gallery recorded 11,549 visitors, far in excess of the average 3,000 visitors who normally attended its exhibitions.⁹⁰

4.2.3. A Māori Pantheon

Just as the cultural nationalism of Centennial Celebrations had led to printmakers focussing their attention on the New Zealand landscape and its flora and fauna, it also generated intense interest in Māori mythology and history. As writer E. H. McCormick observed

To claim for themselves an ancient pedigree is a vanity common alike to new families and to new countries. So it is that the modern New Zealander, seeking his spiritual and cultural origins, looks back beyond the year 1840 to that uncertain but distant time when these islands were first settled by Polynesian voyagers.⁹¹

Printmakers George Woods and E. Mervyn Taylor reinterpreted Māori history and mythology in Pakeha terms,⁹² creating a Māori pantheon of powerful, beautiful archetypes that lived in a timeless, idyllic land. Woods was intensely interested in Māori culture and had a keen appreciation of Polynesian art and sculpture, borne out of his travels in the region. Taylor's interest in Māori subject matter was stimulated by Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*; he was fascinated by the drama of the legends, and the design possibilities they offered to artists.⁹³ In keeping with the positive, patriotic art of the decade, the prints created by Woods and Taylor made no reference to the social tensions resulting from the massive migration of rural Māori to urban areas in

NRAM B771.

⁹⁰ Exhibition Statistics 1940s, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

⁹¹ E. H. McCormick, *Letters And Art In New Zealand*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand, 1940, p. 1.

⁹² Leonard Bell's observation that Taylor's prints were an "imaginative attempts to bring the legends alive for European audiences" could equally be applied to George Woods. Leonard Bell, *The Maori in European Art*, Wellington, A.H. & A. W. Reed Ltd, 1980, p. 132.

⁹³ Tony Mackle, Interview with Mrs Teddy Henderson (formerly Mrs E. M. Taylor), *ibid*.

search of work, a phenomenon resulting in Māori mixing with Pakeha on an unprecedented scale.⁹⁴

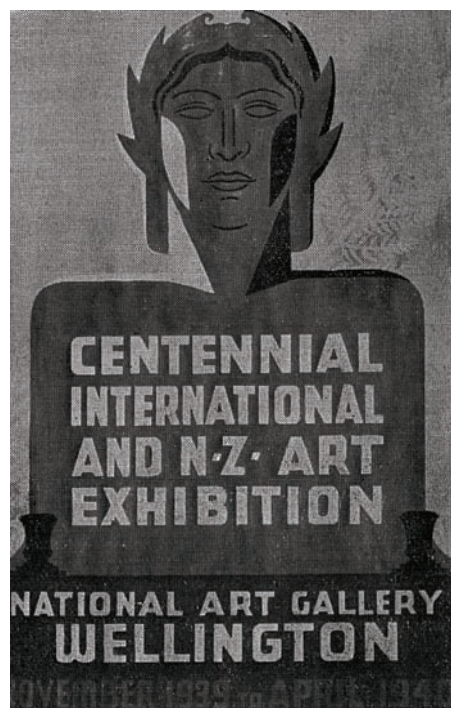


Fig. 39. E. Chapman, *Centennial Art Exhibition Poster*, (linocut), 1939

Woods and Taylor were not the first artists to represent Māori as an Antipodean version of the Ancient Greeks; Sydney Parkinson on Captain Cook's first voyage of discovery to the Pacific in 1769 had presented Polynesian leaders like ancient Roman senators and even gave those he befriended classical Greek names.⁹⁵ Visiting nineteenth-century artist Augustus Earle also "drew several analogies between the appearance and behaviour of the Maori and the people of Greco-Roman antiquity."⁹⁶ Pakeha settlers continued the tradition, "assimilating Māori legends with the tales of Ancient Greece and Rome: Hinemoa swimming across Lake Rotorua to her lover in the enemy camp could be compared (the sex roles reversed) with Paris swimming the

⁹⁴ G. Dunstall, "The Social Pattern", G. Rice (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edition, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 457.

⁹⁵ Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 83-84.

⁹⁶ Leonard Bell, p. 16.

Hellespont to his Helen".⁹⁷ The concept still had such currency that a poster featuring a Māori in the guise of a Greek god was used to advertise the *Centennial Exhibition of International And New Zealand Art*, (Fig. 39).⁹⁸

Woods and Taylor, however, created an entirely new iconography with which to represent their mythological Māori world. They were encouraged in their endeavours by artist Russell Clark and historian J.C. Beaglehole, who joined the lunchtime discussions on New Zealand art that took place at the design studio run by Woods and Taylor.⁹⁹ Most of their work centred on the design of film posters and creating illustrations for Reed Publishing Company. According to Beaglehole, the accent on line and bare directness of the artwork created at the studio offered a complete contrast to "the interminable water colours of the Academy exhibitions."¹⁰⁰ This boldness was also very evident in their prints of Māori and Polynesian subjects.

A work by George Woods which held immediate appeal to New Zealanders celebrating the arrival of settlers' ships in 1840, was [*Maori Navigators*], a scraper-board print, c.1940, (Plate 132). This was inspired by the Māori myth of the Great Fleet of Canoes, said to have departed from the legendary island of Hawaiki on a voyage of discovery and making landfall in New Zealand in 1350.¹⁰¹ Executed in an Art Deco style it was extraordinarily simple, decorative and memorable. Compositionally it owed a debt to Hokusai's woodcut, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, 1823, with Woods

⁹⁷ Denis McLean, *The Prickly Pair, Making Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003, pp. 227-228.

⁹⁸ *The Dominion* newspaper reported that "The winning design shows a picturesque Maori figure against a background of ferns". "Poster Competition Promoted by Art Gallery. Winners Announced", *The Dominion*, 29 September 1939, np. National Art Gallery, Newspaper Clipping Books, MU000134, Te Papa Archives. Interest in cultural parallels between Māori and Ancient Greeks continues to fascinate printmakers, with Marian Maguire making this the subject of her exhibition *The Odyssey of Captain Cook*, 2005.

⁹⁹ "Taylor & Woods, 101 Willis St, Wellington, Show Card & Poster Artists", *Stone's Wellington, Hawke's Bay & Taranaki Directory, 1941*, Wellington: Stone, Son & Co Ltd, 1941, p. 1933.

¹⁰⁰ J.C. Beaglehole, *E. Mervyn Taylor*, p. 5, typescript, E.Mervyn Taylor File, Te Papa Library.

¹⁰¹ Peter Buck, *The Coming of the Maori*, Nelson: Cawthron Institute, 1929, pp. 5-8.

placing the canoe at the very top of the print on the crest of a wave. Emphasis was placed on the patterns of the surging waves that occupied three-quarters of the work and it truly was a visual interpretation of Sir Peter Buck's assertion that the Māori were the "Vikings of the Sunrise".¹⁰² The print was published as a frontispiece to A.H. Reed's *The Story of New Zealand* in 1945, placing it firmly in the public's imagination as an icon of nationhood.

The Māori created by Woods were archetypal, strong and powerful figures executed in a Modigliani-like manner, which revealed his passion for Polynesian sculpture. For example *Mamu*, (aquatint), c.1940, (Plate 133), presented the powerful profile of a young Māori woman, who embodied a spirit of New Zealand nationalism.¹⁰³ The use of an archetypal woman to suggest the spirit of the country was not unknown; the figure of Zealandia, daughter of Britannica, had been employed since 1840 for this purpose, and was emblazoned on the certificate of attendance given to the thousands of visitors who flocked to the Centennial Exhibition.¹⁰⁴ However, *Mamu* was no demure daughter of the Empire, but a new Māori archetype representing Polynesian strength and beauty. *Mamu* was included in the *Second Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand* in 1946 and in *The Studio* in April 1948. Another strikingly sculptural-style head of a Polynesian woman was *Malama*, (aquatint), 1940, (Plate 134).¹⁰⁵ Until now, the aquatint had been used as an equivalent of the watercolour by printmakers such as James Fitzgerald. Woods used the aquatint medium in an unprecedented manner, exploiting its subtle tones to suggest skin tone and muscle. These images were a far cry from the frail and elderly Māori women seen in prints of the 1920s and 1930s.

Commenting on prints by Woods, Basil Honour remarked, "All his work is forceful, expressive of an emotional attitude and sensuous in the elementary and vital

¹⁰² Peter Buck, *Vikings of the Sunrise*, New York: A. Stokes, 1938, p. 12.

¹⁰³ His continuing interest in the iconography of nationhood was revealed by his 1945 design for a new national coat of arms featuring Zealandia and a Māori warrior. Alexander Turnbull Library, E-094-q-001.

¹⁰⁴ William Renwick, 'Introduction', in Renwick, (ed.), *Creating A National Spirit, Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004, p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ Woods also created a wood-engraving entitled *Malama*, which appeared on the cover of *Art In New Zealand* in September 1943.

manner of Negro sculpture”.¹⁰⁶ While conceding that they were powerful works, Wellington art critic ‘H.P.C.’ attacked Woods for confining himself to printmaking; “a draughtsman like this should apologise to himself and the knowledgeable.... Because such a draughtsman should paint”.¹⁰⁷ The sculptural influence on Woods printmaking style was also evident in *Maori Head*, (woodcut), 1945, (Fig. 40). This depicted the powerful profile of a young Māori woman, her head presented in a totemic, semi-abstract manner with boldly contrasting shades of black and white delineating the planes of her face. Woods frequently employed the technique of simplifying his subject matter by accentuating physical characteristics and omitting others entirely. In this instance he was successful, but he could on occasion tend towards grotesque distortion.



Fig. 40. George Woods, *Maori Head*, (woodcut), 1945

New Zealand was now positioning itself as a leading Pacific power, a policy underlined by Prime Minister Peter Fraser’s visit in 1944 to the five Pacific states he

¹⁰⁶ Basil Honour, “Art and the N.Z. Academy”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 13, No 2, December 1940, p. 73.

¹⁰⁷ H.P.C., “The N.Z. Academy of Fine Arts Autumn Exhibition”, *Art In New Zealand* Vol 14, No 4, June 1942, p. 158.

had responsibility for administering: the Cook Islands, Raratonga, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji.¹⁰⁸ Woods was particularly enthusiastic about such subject matter and created a series of Art Deco-style colour linocuts depicting an imaginary Pacific Paradise, which made no reference to the recent devastation of several of the Pacific Islands during World War Two. An early example was *Malia*, (colour linocut), c.1947, (Plate 135), which depicted a Polynesian woman with long, blonde hair, wearing a white hibiscus behind one ear. Howard Wadman selected this print as the frontispiece for *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand* in 1947. Equally exotic was *Wind, (Strong Wind)*, (colour linocut), c.1947, (Plate 136), which featured two young blonde Polynesian women dressed in lava lavas, struggling against the prevailing wind. The women's bare breasts and brightly coloured green and purple lava lavas gave them an air of stylised exoticness. This was also evident in *Decorative Design No 2*, (colour linocut), c.1946, (Plate 137), where a lava lava clad woman with long green hair was embraced by her male partner.¹⁰⁹ Howard Wadman aptly described Woods as

an illustrator with a strong sense of the decorative, who is powerfully attracted by Polynesian figures. From these he has made many etchings and colour lino-cuts which have shown him to be one of the most sensuous of our artists. In a period marked by the intellectual approach to art, Geo. Woods confronts us, in many of his works, with an almost disturbingly intimate feeling of flesh and blood.¹¹⁰

Woods was a great admirer of Eric Gill and Robert Gibbings, printmakers renowned for their depiction of the female form. He collected books by Gibbings,¹¹¹ and would have already been familiar with his wood-engravings of Polynesian myths through his books: *The 7th Man: a true cannibal tale of the South Seas islands told in fifteen wood-engravings and precisely one hundred and eighty nine words* (1930); *Iorana! A Tahitian Journal* (1932); *A True Tale of Love in Tonga* (1935) and *Typee, A Narrative*

¹⁰⁸ A.M.R., "Greater New Zealand. Our Place in the Pacific", *New Zealand Listener*, Vol 12, No 288, 29 December 1944, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ These two prints may have been among the eleven colour linocuts Woods exhibited in the first exhibition staged by the Fiji Arts Club in Suva in June 1948. A reviewer noted that he had chosen to print the majority on black paper to give them added impact, "Effective First Exhibition by Fiji Arts Club", *The Fiji Times and Herald*, 7 June 1948, p. 5. Artist's File, Te Papa Library.

¹¹⁰ Howard Wadman, "George Woods", *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, No 4, 1948, p. 103.

¹¹¹ Correspondence with Barry Woods, 14 October 2004.

of a *Four Months' Residence Among the Natives of the Marquesas Islands* (1938). Recurrent themes in these books were Gibbings' fascination with Polynesian myths and appreciation of the female nude.

E. Mervyn Taylor adopted a different approach to Woods in his prints of an Antipodean paradise. He peopled indigenous Neo-Romantic landscapes with archetypal Māori figures, creating works which had a Biblical rather than a sensual atmosphere. For example, *Creation*, (wood-engraving), 1947, (Plate 138), featured a Māori Eve, lying on God's outstretched hand, being presented to an Antipodean Adam.¹¹² Taylor adopted the classical allegorical convention of personifying continents as archetypal people surrounded by the plants and animals of the country they represented. His New Zealand Adam and Eve were surrounded by indigenous plant and animal life including a tuatara, moa, white heron, morepork, a whale, native trees and ferns. Stylistically this engraving showed a debt to the Leon Underwood school of wood-engraving, particularly that of Blair Hughes-Stanton and Gertrude Hermes who created engravings of black, classicised figures to depict mythical and religious imagery. Taylor's Māori Adam and Eve appeared again in *Idyll*, (wood-engraving), c.1949, (Plate 139), where they were shown in a lush New Zealand Garden of Eden. A native bird perched on Eve's hand, emphasising the harmonious relationship between man and nature. Less cluttered with obvious symbols of national identity, this print was engraved in a variety of textures, adding to its tapestry-like appearance.

Taylor began reaching a much wider audience through the wood-engraved illustrations he created for George Henderson's *The Antecedents and Early Life of Valentine Savage, Known as Taina*, published in 1948. These included *Haoratipa Diving For Crayfish, (Crayfish Diver)*, (wood-engraving), 1947, (Plate 140), a beautifully conceived work which depicted New Zealand subject matter in classical terms. Another highly stylised work was *Tangihanga*, (wood-engraving), 1948, (Plate 141), which showed three young women lamenting the death of a warrior.

¹¹² Peter Vangioni suggests this work could also be interpreted in terms of the Māori myth of Tāne; after separating his parents Papa the earth and Rangi the sky, the earth enjoyed a period of great abundance and light. Conversely it may represent the myth of Tāne creating Hine-ahu-one, the first woman. Peter Vangioni, "E. Mervyn Taylor", Anna Rogers (ed.), *Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu: The Collections*, Christchurch: The Gallery, 2003, p. 186.

Contemporary reviewers were divided about the engravings; Beaglehole felt that they were coarse and clumsy because they were created under strict deadlines and printed on poor quality paper.¹¹³ Reviewer Frances Fyfe, however, declared Taylor's wood-engravings to be the book's saving grace. "In care and attention to historical detail the engravings are faultless. *Tangihanga*, possibly the finest engraving in the book, is a perfectly designed and balanced group, achieving in black and white a striking statuesque effect".¹¹⁴

Taylor cited Claire Leighton's craft-based approach to artmaking as one which had a major influence on his own philosophy and he admired British printmakers Agnes Miller Parker, Robert Gibbings and Gertrude Hermes.¹¹⁵ In his early work admiration led to emulation, but by the late 1940s Taylor had developed a highly individual style that had no precedent in British art. In 1948 Taylor established his own design studio and for the rest of his career created both commercial and fine art prints. One of the first commissions he undertook as a newly established designer was the creation of wood-engravings of Māori myths for I.C.I. (NZ) Ltd's 1948 calendar, a series which demonstrated that Taylor's meticulous printmaking style encompassed both his fine art and commercial art ventures.¹¹⁶

In *Maui Taming the Sun*, (wood-engraving), 1948, (Plate 142), for example, Taylor presented Maui and his brothers in the style of Greek warriors, with their exaggerated poses outlining the legend without the viewer needing recourse to the text. Taylor's highly stylised and intricately cut wood-engraving measured only 8.9 x 12.8 centimetres. However, as John Drawbridge noted, while most of Taylor's wood-

¹¹³ J.C. Beaglehole, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Frances Fyfe, "*Taina* by G. M. Henderson with Wood Engravings by E.M. Taylor", *Design Review*, Vol 2, No 5, Feb-March 1949, p. 10.

¹¹⁵ E. Mervyn Taylor, *Engravings on Wood*, Wellington: The Mermaid Press, 1957, p. 9.

¹¹⁶ I.C.I. also employed George Woods to create scraper-board prints for its 1950 New Zealand calendar. Taylor and Woods were in esteemed company, I.C.I. Ltd had previously commissioned artists of the calibre of Edward Nevinson, C.R. Nevinson and John Skeaping to design its advertising material. Joyce Watkins, "Advertisers as Patron. The Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd", *The Studio*, Vol 123, Jan-June 1942, p. 108.

engravings were relatively small, they encapsulated a sense of drama normally associated with much larger-scale works. “This sense of relationship between actual size and scale has something to do with the emotional quality of the work, and the architectural organisation of even the smallest engraving”.¹¹⁷

Taylor’s prints were so archetypal that they were purchased by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs to present to overseas dignitaries, such as the Emperor of Japan, and as gifts for embassies and consulates.¹¹⁸ Taylor would place six scenes of a Māori myth in a specially built frame then write an explanation of the myth on the reverse; he created so many of these presentation copies that his colleagues called him a government artist and felt he should have been paid a retainer by the state.¹¹⁹ Earlier printmakers Stephen Champ, Christopher Perkins and Francis Shurrock, would have shuddered at the thought of being labelled Government artists, however by the 1940s, artists and the Government alike shared a common cultural agenda.

One of the few other printmakers to present Māori in the guise of Greek gods was Leo Bensemann. His wood-engraving, *Maori Head*, (Version 1), 1946, (Plate 143), featured a stylised profile of a young Māori warrior; he gave the warrior a Grecian gravity by enfolding him in a cloak of flax which resembled a chiton. Bensemann was largely responsible for introducing artists associated with The Group to writers and musicians who congregated around the Caxton Press, all of whom were pursuing a nationalistic cultural agenda.¹²⁰ Bensemann himself did not subscribe to their vision, and this print was a departure from his usual artwork.¹²¹ *Maori Head* was reproduced in *The Studio* in 1948 in an article where Hipkins described him as a fanciful engraver.¹²²

¹¹⁷ J. Drawbridge, “New Zealand Printmakers: Number One: E.Mervyn Taylor, 1906-1964”, *Education*, Number One, 1982, np.

¹¹⁸ Tony Mackle, Interview with Mrs Teddy Henderson (formerly Mrs E. M. Taylor), *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Dennis Donavan, “Remembering Leo Bensemann”, *Landfall* 157, Vol 40, No 1, p. 78.

¹²¹ Peter Simpson (ed.), *Engravings on Wood by Leo Bensemann*, Auckland: Holloway Press, 2004, np.

¹²² Roland Hipkins, *ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

Recent historians have been extremely dismissive of prints of Māori subjects created by these populist printmakers. For example, Leonard Bell and Francis Pound have reiterated Peter Tomory's view that E.M. Taylor's prints amounted to little more than a superficial response to exotic subject matter.¹²³ Francis Pound considered Taylor's wood-engraving, *Maui Taming the Sun*, typical of "those whose Western realist manner, untouched by Maori style even in their depictions of Maori subjects, may be described as the primitivist picturesque".¹²⁴ However, Douglas Horrell has demonstrated that rather than being untouched by his exposure to Māori carvings, Taylor's study led to him altering his approach to wood-engraving by adopting Māori carving techniques.¹²⁵ Nor could he be accused of appropriating imagery, for he was actively encouraged to incorporate designs from Māori carvings into his printmaking by members of the Ngati Poneke Maori Club, one of Wellington's most prominent Māori cultural societies.¹²⁶



Fig. 41. John Pascoe (attrib.), *The Coming of the Maori*, linocut book jacket design, 1948

¹²³ Leonard Bell, "Landfall, the 'Primitive', and the Visual Arts in the 1950s", *Landfall, New Zealand Arts & Letters, The Fifties Issue*, No 185, April 1993, p. 108.

¹²⁴ Francis Pound, *The Space Between: Pakeha Use of Maori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*, Auckland: Workshop Press, 1994, p. 131.

¹²⁵ Douglas Horrell, "The Engaging Line: E. Mervyn Taylor's Prints On Maori Subjects", M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 2006, p. 29.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Nowhere in this debate did either Bell or Pound take cognisance of the role played by Māori leaders in encouraging the adoption of Māori imagery as a strategy to ensure that Māoridom was at the forefront of the country's developing symbolism of nationhood.¹²⁷ Particularly revealing in this regard was Sir Peter Buck's choice of book jacket design for his history of the Māori people, *The Coming of the Maori*, published in 1949 (Fig. 41).¹²⁸ Buck appeared to have no objections to the use of stylised Māori motifs in this linocut design, even if modern critics would have considered them unacceptable examples of the 'primitive picturesque'.

Oblivious to the future debate their work would generate, printmakers continued with their task of nation-building, creating prints of Māori legends, indigenous landscapes, flora and fauna. If the war was referred to at all, it was usually presented as a very distant conflict.

4.2.4 The Distant War

Though artists regularly complained about the lack of Government commissions for war artists, as a group they showed little interest in wartime subject matter, a response that attracted criticism from contemporary commentators.

Some blame must be laid upon the artists, who with few exceptions have failed to realise the new field of expression since 1939.... Most of our artists still paint pre-war subjects in the pre-war manner. Who has attempted to record with pencil or paint the vivid activities of railways or ports, of war-time farming, soldiers and W.A.A.F.S., and the thousand-and-one stirring scenes happening in these historic years?.¹²⁹

Few printmakers took up the challenge, and most of those who did created reassuring images of the home front. For example, *Bofors in the Moonlight*, (linocut), c.1942 by Kenneth W. Hassall, (Plate 144), provided a symbolic image of soldiers guarding a star-studded Southern sky. Similarly, *Morning in Convoy*, (linocut), 1942, (Fig. 42), by

¹²⁷ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged, A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Allen Lane & Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 2001, p. 213.

¹²⁸ The artist may have been John Pascoe who provided illustrations for the text.

¹²⁹ "Poneke", "Art And The War. New Zealand's Missed Opportunities", *New Zealand Magazine*, Vol 22, No 4, July-August 1943, p. 10.

Stewart MacLennan was more of an exercise in decorative design than an attempt to express the fears of submarine attack that led ships to travel in convoys.



Fig. 42. Stewart MacLennan, *Morning in Convoy*, (linocut), 1942

Francis Shurrock's etching, *Taylors From Hut 50*, 1942, (Plate 145), gave no hint that the Taylor's Mistake beach near Christchurch was considered a potential enemy landing point,¹³⁰ nor that its holiday homes were now a barracks for the men of the 87th Heavy Battery New Zealand Artillery, soldiers who manned the gun emplacement at the nearby Taylor's Battery.¹³¹ No soldiers or military equipment were included, instead Shurrock paid minute attention to the indigenous plants tumbling down from the summit to the shore, and to the varying textures of the plants, the shapes of the huts and the patterns of the waves. The decoratively linear execution of the work and fascination with decorative pattern revealed his passion for Japanese woodcuts.

E. Mervyn Taylor also avoided military subject matter in his printmaking, a somewhat difficult stance given his position as Art Editor of the New Zealand Army's *Current Affairs Bulletin*. The front-cover he engraved for its *War in the Pacific* issue,

¹³⁰ D.A. Buckley, *Godley Head and Battery Point. A History of Coastal Defence During World War II*, Christchurch: N.Z., Ministry of Defence, 1984, p. 9.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 472.

June 1944, (Fig. 43), showed his discomfort, with most of the print featuring indigenous flora and a beautiful dawn rather than military action.

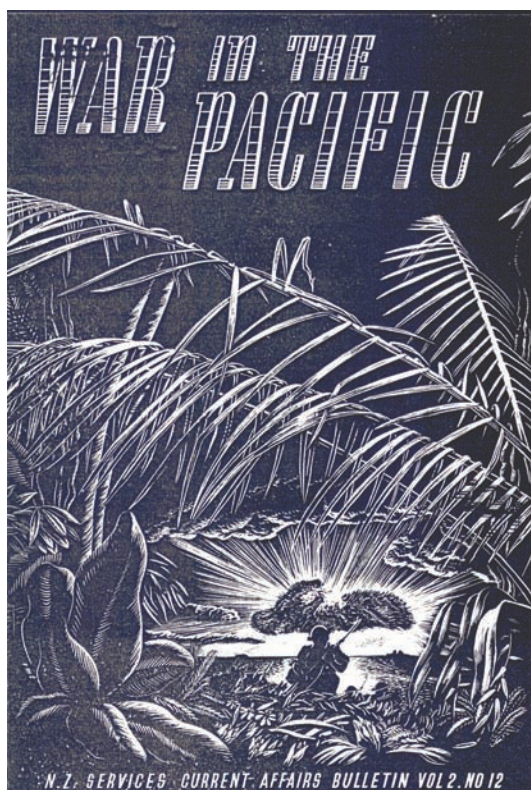


Fig. 43. E. Mervyn Taylor, *War In the Pacific*, *N.Z. Services Current Affairs Bulletin*, (wood-engraving), 1944

Phyllis Crowley and May Smith were the only printmakers known to have created anti-war prints. These were exceedingly rare in New Zealand, due to the introduction of the *Censorship and Publicity Emergency Regulations* in 1939.¹³² The centrepiece of Crowley's lithograph, *My Son!, My Son!*, c.1942, (Plate 146), was a gaunt mother cradling a baby in her arms while all around her military, political and ecclesiastical leaders demanded "More babies wanted". Crowley, a Pacifist by conviction, executed the work in an uncompromising social realist style, using black litho crayon to emphasise the solemnity of the print.¹³³ In subject, style and execution it

¹³² The Government's determination to show no tolerance towards dissenters was demonstrated by it using these regulations to close down the left-wing journal *Tomorrow* for opposing conscription. Rachel Barrowman, *A Popular Vision, The Arts And The Left In New Zealand 1930-1950*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1991, p. 40.

¹³³ Crowley had now replaced Quoin Club member Rueben Watts as tutor in metalwork and jewellery design at Elam. Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *We Learnt To See. Elam's Rutland Group 1935-1958*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2004, p. 116.

indicated that Crowley was following in the tradition of her former Elam printmaking tutor Stephen Champ, who had used his prints to attack the Government during the 1930s. Crowley's *My Son! My Son!* was exhibited at the Rutland Group Annual Exhibition in 1942, alongside another anti-war lithograph, *Civilization!*, c.1942, (Plate 147).¹³⁴ A reviewer from *Art In New Zealand* described them as "very interesting and impressive".¹³⁵

Far more allegorical was May Smith's colour linocut, *Animal Kingdom*, 1940, (Plate 148), which contrasted scenes of peaceful co-existence in the animal kingdom with images of contemporary warfare.¹³⁶ However, the anti-war message it contained was completely overwhelmed by the print being executed like a densely patterned textile. The anti-war prints created by Crowley and Smith represented their personal response to the war, rather than being works generated by an organised group of printmakers attempting to make their views widely known. In an age of patriotic fervour their stance was quite exceptional.

4.3 Expatriate Printmakers

While the majority of New Zealand printmakers avoided wartime subject matter, it became the preoccupation of James Boswell and John Buckland Wright who were living in war-torn London. Also working in London were Len Lye and E. Heber Thompson while Adele Younghusband continued studying under George Bell in Melbourne. After the war, Rona Dyer and James Kenneth Young enrolled at the London Central School of Arts and Crafts.

¹³⁴ Crowley's other anti-war prints included *And I have commanded That ye love one another*, (wood-engraving), c.1940, and *[In Memoriam]*, a minute wood-engraving, c.1940, which featured a skull pierced by a crucifix and a Bible by a bayonet. Private Collection, Auckland.

¹³⁵ "Art Notes Auckland", *Art In New Zealand*, December 1942, Vol XIV, No 2, p. 2.

¹³⁶ E. Eastmond & M. Penfold, *Women and the Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd, 1986, np.

With “anti-fascism now being a sign of patriotism rather than radicalism”, James Boswell like many other members of the Artists International Association, stopped attacking the British Government and joined it in fighting European fascism.¹³⁷ Compared to his bitter and revealing prints of London life during the 1930s, Boswell’s lithograph, *Quiet Evening*, 1940, (Plate 149), presented an almost humorous view of London at war. Playing on the British propensity for understatement, it featured a bombed out street where both the corner café and a prostitute were carrying on business as usual. Boswell made a brief visit back to Auckland in 1940 and made a gift of 44 of his lithographs to the Auckland City Art Gallery. These were shown in the *Exhibition of Lithographs by James Boswell* held in April 1940,¹³⁸ which *Art In New Zealand* described as being “full of character and vitality”.¹³⁹ Boswell served in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a radiographer, and on his return from Iraq was elected President of the Artists’ International Alliance in 1944. His position as Britain’s leading satirist was confirmed by his appointment as art editor of *Lilliput Magazine* in 1946, where he gathered the country’s most promising young satirists around him including Paul Hogarth, Ronald Searle and Gerard Hoffnung.¹⁴⁰ In New Zealand, Eric Lee-Johnson made an effort to raise Boswell’s profile by suggesting that Harry Tombs publish eight of his lithographs in *Art In New Zealand*, but his request was declined.¹⁴¹

Boswell made another visit to New Zealand in 1948, but when asked by a reporter why he had stayed away from the country for so long Boswell retorted “What would I do when I came back? The field was limited in New Zealand. There were few

¹³⁷ Tony Rickaby, “Artists’ International”, *History Workshop*, No 6, Autumn 1988, p. 163.

¹³⁸ As mentioned in Chapter Three, this exhibition included four lithographs from Boswell’s *Fall of London Series*, 1932, which Boswell renamed as the *Spanish Civil War Series* before they went on display. His reasons for changing the title have not been recorded, but probably resulted from his wish not to exhibit prints showing the destruction of London at a time when the city was actually under German bombardment. Discussions with Jane Davidson, Curator, Auckland Art Gallery, 2005.

¹³⁹ “Art Notes Auckland”, *Art In New Zealand*, June 1940, Vol XII, No 4, p. 245.

¹⁴⁰ H. Bellamy & J. Saville (eds.), “Boswell, James Edward Buchanan (1906-71) Artist and Socialist”, *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Vol 3, London: MacMillan, 1976, p. 17.

¹⁴¹ Letter from Harry Tombs to Eric Lee-Johnson, 13 March 1945, Eric Lee-Johnson Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS-Papers-5437-008.

buyers and prices were low”.¹⁴² He might well have added that strict censorship laws would have muzzled him as they had done Noel Counihan, an Australian communist printmaker who had been deported from Wellington in 1940.¹⁴³ Boswell left the Communist Party and in 1948 published *The Artist's Dilemma* in which he declared employment in art schools and commercial studios ruinous to an artist's career.¹⁴⁴ When Boswell died in 1971, *The Times* stated that “Influenced by the German satirists of the 1920s he became a leading spirit in the revived art of social satire in this country”.¹⁴⁵

John Buckland Wright's Neo-Romantic wood-engravings offered a completely different view of a city under bombardment. For example, *London Fire*, (wood-engraving), 1941, (Plate 150), depicted central London after the aerial bombardment of the Blitz, tangled girders and chimney stacks stood among the ruins of the city, while the outline of St Paul's Cathedral could be seen lit up by anti-aircraft light in the background. *London Fire* was based on Wright's personal experience as a London fire warden, a duty he undertook in addition to working alongside William Hayter and Julian Trevelyan at the Industrial Camouflage Research Unit.¹⁴⁶ Wright also contributed prints to *Salvo for Russia*, a fundraising portfolio of prints issued by Ithell Colhoun and John Piper in 1942.¹⁴⁷

Wright did not confine himself to Neo-Romanticism alone, and throughout the 1940s maintained a strong interest in Surrealist printmaking. In April 1940 he chaired a

¹⁴² James Boswell, “Developments in Art In Great Britain”, *The Auckland Star*, 24 May 1948, np. Artist's File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

¹⁴³ Boswell met Counihan in Melbourne during this visit and commissioned him to create drawings for *Lilliput*. Soon after, Counihan relocated to London and Boswell wrote the preface for his folio of linocuts entitled *War or Peace*, 1950. Robert Smith, *Noel Counihan Prints 1931-1981*, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1981, p. 28.

¹⁴⁴ James Boswell, *The Artist's Dilemma*, London: Bodley Head, 1947, p. 30

¹⁴⁵ “Mr James Boswell”, *The Times*, 17 May 1971, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶ Julian Trevelyan, *Indigo Days*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996, p. 112.

¹⁴⁷ Wright's contributions included *Combat* and *Antique Statue after Roland Penrose*. Redfern Gallery, *An Exhibition of British Prints 1914-1960*, at the New York Fine Print Fair, London: The Redfern Gallery, 1987, p. 21. National Gallery of Australia Library.

meeting of London Surrealists,¹⁴⁸ which resulted in the newly re-invigorated group staging the *Surrealism Today Exhibition* at the Zwemmer Gallery in June 1940. One of Wright's entries included a colour wood-engraving, *Sibling*, 1940, (Plate 151), an abstract and monumental figure of a woman on a shore that showed the influence both of De Chirico and Henry Moore.¹⁴⁹ *Sibling* was reproduced in the Surrealist magazine the *London Bulletin* in June 1940. After the war, eminent British printmaker John Piper recommended Wright's appointment as etching master at the Slade School of Art. British print historian Joanna Selborne has described Wright as "an inspirational teacher and proselytizer of graphic art, whose manual *Etching and Engraving* (1953), inspired many practitioners".¹⁵⁰ William Hayter's plans to appoint Wright Director of a London branch of Atelier 17 were overturned by Wright's unexpected death in 1954.¹⁵¹

Also participating in the *Surrealism Today Exhibition* in 1940 was Len Lye, and a series of his Surrealist woodcuts, [*Free Radicals*], (Plate 152), appeared in the same issue of the *London Bulletin*.¹⁵² Wystan Curnow has shown that these woodcut images prefigured imagery later seen in Lye's film, *Free Radicals*, 1958.¹⁵³ Never a prolific printmaker, Lye was typical of artists who experimented with printmaking in order to try out new ideas before going on to execute them in their preferred media.

While Wright and Lye were growing increasingly more avant-garde in their printmaking, E. Heber Thompson was becoming progressively more conservative. Like British artist Laura Knight, he focussed on gypsies, peasants and the ballet, executing

¹⁴⁸ Michel Remy, *Surrealism in Britain*, Brookfield, Vt: Ashgate, 1999, p. 210.

¹⁴⁹ Zwemmer Gallery, *Surrealism Today*, June 12-July 3, 1940, London: The Zwemmer Gallery, 1940, p. 1. National Gallery of Australia Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Joanna Selborne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration 1904-1940*, London: the British Library, 2001, p. 370.

¹⁵¹ Christopher Buckland Wright, *Surreal Times, The Abstract Engravings and Wartime Letters of John Buckland Wright*, Huddersfield, the Fleece Press, 2000, pp. 80-81.

¹⁵² A similar print by Lye is awaiting cataloguing in the Govett-Brewster Collection. Correspondence with Tyler Cann, Curator, Len Lye Collection, Govett-Brewster Gallery, 17 October 2005.

¹⁵³ Wystan Curnow, "Len Lye's Sculpture and the Body of his Work", *Len Lye, 1901-1980: a special issue*, *Art New Zealand*, No 17, 1981, p. 36.

his work in a rather staid manner. Ballet in particular seemed to fascinate him, and he gained permission from Madame Rambert of the Ballet Rambert Company to sketch her dancers.¹⁵⁴ His etching entitled *Interval*, c.1940, (Fig. 44), for example depicted a dancer warming her feet beside a fire during a break in a performance, but though he took an informal approach to the composition, it was traditionally executed. Thompson's prints were well-known in New Zealand, he regularly sent etchings back for exhibition, and his work was often featured in *Art In New Zealand*. Now a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers, and the National Gallery of New Zealand's London agent, Thompson exerted considerable influence over works purchased by the Gallery, and advocated the acquisition of conservative British and European prints rather than contemporary New Zealand works.¹⁵⁵



Fig. 44. E. Heber Thompson, *Interval*, (etching), c. 1940

Working in a far more modern style was printmaker Adele Younghusband who returned to Auckland from Melbourne in 1940, where she had been studying Surrealism and Abstraction under George Bell.¹⁵⁶ Her 1941 *Solo Exhibition of Surrealist and*

¹⁵⁴ Letter from Madame Rambert, Ballet Rambert, London to E. Heber Thompson, 16 April 1945. Te Papa Archives, MS89 CA 1571.

¹⁵⁵ Tony Mackle, "Stewart Bell MacLennan; The Man for the Job", *The Journal of New Zealand Art History*, Vol 26, 2005, p. 60.

¹⁵⁶ Felicity Moore, *Classical Modernism: The George Bell Circle*, Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1992, p. 1.

Abstract Art at the Auckland Society of Arts clubrooms included several prints, few of which could be described as Surrealist.¹⁵⁷ Arthur Hipwell described her approach. “Flowers, still-life and figures are used as motives for two-dimensional and abstract designs, which, after being reduced to pure designs, emerge once more as recognisable objects but endowed with a surrealist character”.¹⁵⁸ In 1945 Younghusband held a solo exhibition in Hamilton, which featured seventeen linocuts including *Girl Ironing*, (linocut), c.1942, (Plate 153).¹⁵⁹ In this powerful Surrealist print, she took a mundane domestic task and infused it with a nightmarish quality. It was not, however, typical of her printmaking style. Nicola Green has insightfully described Younghusband as a ‘transitional modernist’, whose art displayed a decorative rather than an analytical response to modernity.¹⁶⁰

Rona Dyer was one of the few younger printmakers of the period to retain a strong interest in Neo-Romanticism. Winning a national competition for public mural design enabled her to enrol at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London in 1949 to study wood-engraving and book illustration under Gertrude Hermes. The two women appeared to have a particular affinity; both had begun their artistic careers as sculptors, and adopted a sculptural approach to their printmaking. Dyer recalls that Hermes kept her classes small in order to provide students with maximum individual attention.¹⁶¹ Hermes taught Dyer how to create woodcuts in the traditional Japanese method, and arranged for her to meet with John Farleigh, whose work she particularly admired.

¹⁵⁷ Linocuts in the exhibition included *Industry*, 1937, *The Rehearsal*, 1938, *The Queue*, c.1940, *Skipping Maids*, c.1940 and *The Daily Bread*, c.1940. Auckland Society of Arts, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Drawings & Paintings Including Sur-Realist And Abstract Works by Adele Younghusband*, Auckland: The Society, 1941. Special Collections, Hamilton City Libraries.

¹⁵⁸ Arthur Hipwell, “Adele Younghusband - A New Zealand Surrealist”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol XIV, No 2, December 1941, p. 84.

¹⁵⁹ Waikato Society of Arts, *Catalogue of Pictures by Mrs A. Younghusband on Exhibition at Toorak Hall, May 1945*, Hamilton: The Society, 1945. Special Collections, Hamilton City Libraries.

¹⁶⁰ Nicola Green, “Adele Younghusband A Transitional Modernist”, *Art New Zealand*, No 91, Winter 1999, p. 79.

¹⁶¹ Correspondence with Rona Dyer, 22 September 2004.

Soon after her arrival, Dyer reported that “Engraving under the guidance of Gertrude Hermes has increased my assurance that wood engraving can be one of the most creative media”.¹⁶² Her printmaking subject matter and style certainly grew increasingly conceptual under Hermes’ influence. The subject of Dyer’s wood-engraving, *Man*, 1949, (Plate 154), for example, was an archetypal Adam figure shown pointing towards a distant planet, curved waves of light and energy flowing between his hand and the planet he reached towards. It also showed a distinct debt to William Blake’s etchings, particularly his illustrations for *The Gates of Paradise* (1793).¹⁶³



Fig. 45. James Kenneth Young, *New York Subway, 2.p.m.* (etching), 1950

Also attending the Central School of Arts and Crafts but working in a completely different idiom was Hawera printmaker James Kenneth Young, who had begun studying etching under W. R. Robins at the School in 1948. Young was awarded the Prix-de-Rome for etching in 1950, and elected as an Associate of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers, achievements which led his tutor to describe him as “a born etcher”.¹⁶⁴ In the same year, Young exhibited several prints at the New Zealand

¹⁶² H. Tombs (ed.), “New Zealand Artists Abroad - Rona Dyer”, *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand No 5*, 1949, p. 181.

¹⁶³ Milton Klonsky, *William Blake The Seer and His Visions*, London: Orbis Publishing Ltd, 1977, pp. 52-53.

¹⁶⁴ “Born Etcher From Hawera Wins Prix De Rome”, *The Evening Post*, 2 May 1950, np. Artist’s File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

Academy of Fine Arts, including *New York Subway*, 2. *pm.* (etching), 1950, (Fig. 45), which demonstrated that he shared James Boswell's satirical printmaking style. Young had worked as a commercial artist in the Art Department of *The New Zealand Herald* before serving in the Royal New Zealand Air Force during World War Two.¹⁶⁵ By 1946 he was studying in California and working as a commercial artist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He later moved to New York before enrolling at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London.

Printmakers like Dyer and Young returning from overseas study during the 1950s could expect a hostile welcome from the art establishment. Whereas in the past artists had been actively encouraged to study abroad, there was now a perception that international study was detrimental to the growth of New Zealand's art of national identity. Indicative was Peter Tomory, who when appointed Director of the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1956, cited international study by New Zealand artists as a source of emasculation.¹⁶⁶ He credited the advances made in developing an art of national identity to those who had not studied abroad, particularly those who had remained in New Zealand during World War Two.

4.4 Book Illustration, Bookplates & Printed Textiles

Printmakers were now accepting commissions to illustrate books and magazines, advertising material and textiles on an unprecedented scale. One of the driving forces behind this was the newly formed Architectural Centre in Wellington. In the first issue of the centre's journal, members described themselves as "a group of architects and draughtsmen and wood engravers and other people whose greatest claim to affiliation is an overriding enthusiasm for good design in all things".¹⁶⁷ This issue also contained a review of a print exhibition by K.W. Hassall, E.Mervyn Taylor, George Woods and

¹⁶⁵ Eric Lee-Johnson (ed.), "Notes on Some Painters", *Arts Year Book 6, Sixth Annual Review of the Arts in New Zealand*, 1950, p. 113.

¹⁶⁶ Peter Tomory, *New Zealand Painting*, Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1956, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ "Editorial", *New Zealand Design Review*, Journal of The Architectural Centre Inc, No 1, April 1948, p. 1.

Stewart MacLennan which had recently been held at the Wellington Central Library. According to the reviewer their prints would stand comparison with prints by contemporary European artists; moreover “The print is a democratic form of art, being easy of acquisition to the slender purse, and is one of the most potent means of forming public taste through its widespread dispersal as book illustration”.¹⁶⁸ It was an attitude curators today would dismiss as paternalistic, but reflected the fact that artists of the 1940s felt it was their duty to shape the public’s taste for art, and that prints provided the perfect means of doing so.

The Caxton Press in Christchurch commissioned printmakers as illustrators, and the growth of other private presses, including the Pegasus Press, Pelorus Press and E. Mervyn Taylor’s Mermaid Press, increased demand for their services. Woods and Taylor were the country’s most prominent book illustrators, and the prints they created as illustrations were included in their solo and group exhibitions. For example, the scraper-board prints Woods created for *Myths and Legends of Maoriland*, published in 1946, were shown in a solo exhibition at the Wellington Public Library in 1947.



Fig. 46. George Woods, *Battle of the Wind and the Sea Gods*, (scraper-board), 1945

Images such as the *Battle of the Wind and the Sea Gods*, (scraper-board), 1945, (Fig. 46), resulted in Woods winning the Esther Glen Award from the New Zealand Library

¹⁶⁸ “Prints & the Illustrated Book”, *New Zealand Design Review*, Journal of The Architectural Centre Inc, No 1, April 1948, p. 2.

Association for outstanding contribution to children's literature.¹⁶⁹ The impact of book-illustration was so great that printmakers began creating prints inspired by books, even when they had not been commissioned to illustrate them. For example, Woods created a series of colour linocuts based on *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. His use of rich colouring and patterning gave them the appearance of Persian miniatures, as was particularly evident in *Come with old Khayyam*, (colour linocut), 1950, (Plate 155).



Fig. 47. Rona Dyer, *The Legend of Io*, (wood-engraving), 1953

Rona Dyer completed her Diploma in book illustration at the Central School of Arts and Crafts by creating a series of wood-engravings for Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*; these illustrations displayed her continuing fascination with contrasting textures and tones.¹⁷⁰ On her return to New Zealand, Dyer began working on her own version of *The Legend of Io*, the Māori myth of creation, (Fig. 47). The powerful black figure wood-

¹⁶⁹ The book also contained art nouveau illustrations by W. Dittmer, making Woods the ideal choice for co-illustrator, as his forceful prints shared the same powerful decorativeness. A. W. Reed, *Myths and Legends of Maoriland*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1946.

¹⁷⁰ Alfred Tennyson, *Morte d'Arthur*, illustrated with wood-engravings by Rona Dyer, London: Central School of Arts and Crafts, 1950. Private Collection Christchurch.

engraved illustrations she created to illustrate this book demonstrated a new-found maturity and powerful simplicity in her printmaking style. Publications ranging from *The School Journal* to the *New Zealand Listener* and *Landfall* were extensively illustrated with wood-engravings by Taylor, Woods and Dick Seelye. As co-editor of the Architectural Centre, Taylor created illustrations for its journal, *Design Review*, sometimes combining photographs with linocuts, a technique he had learnt while creating posters for United Artists Films.¹⁷¹ The journal's front cover for September 1950, (Fig. 48), demonstrated how he integrated the two media, in this case by reflecting the linocut garden in the windows of the photographed house.

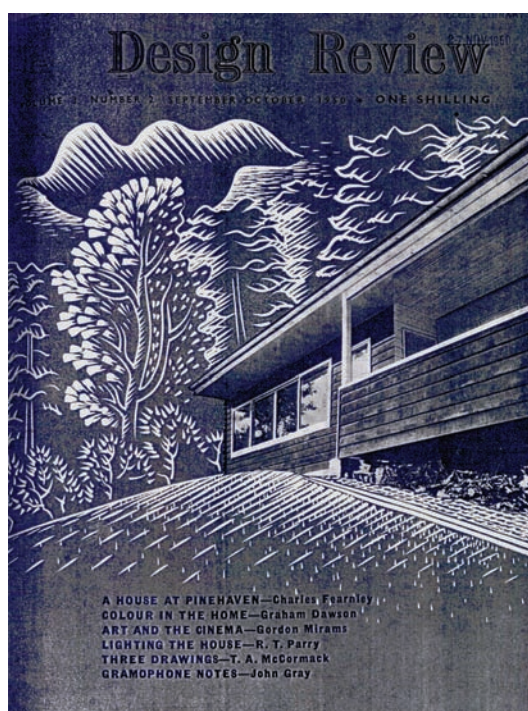


Fig. 48. E. Mervyn Taylor, *Front Cover, Design Review*, (photograph-linocut), September 1950

While demand for printmakers to illustrate books and magazines was growing, commissions for them to design bookplates were diminishing. Among the few artists still creating bookplates were Hilda Wiseman, Louise Tilsley and E. Mervyn Taylor, who corresponded regularly about the bookplates they were working on and held a workshop in 1946 to discuss printing techniques and exchange equipment.¹⁷² Taylor

¹⁷¹ Poster by E. Mervyn Taylor, New Zealand Film Archive Wellington, Ref D0687.

¹⁷² Ian Thwaites, *In Another Dimension: Auckland Bookplates 1920-1960*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2002, p. 89.

remained the country's most prominent bookplate artist. His wood-engraved bookplate *D.G. Reilly: Ex Libris*, 1945, (Fig. 49), depicted a koruru and a lyre, in what had become a characteristic of Taylor's work, the blending of Māori and classical Greek imagery.¹⁷³ After the war, Hilda Wiseman curated the *Exhibition of Bookplates from the Collections of Neville Barnett & Hilda Wiseman* at the Auckland City Art Gallery, and the New Zealand Ex Libris Society re-established itself in 1948, however, it was evident that the golden age of bookplates had come to an end.¹⁷⁴

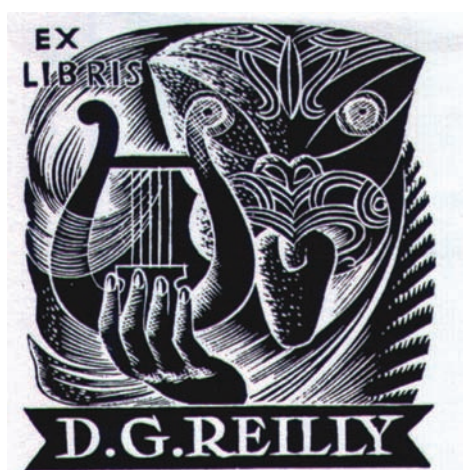


Fig. 49. E. Mervyn Taylor, *D. G. Reilly: Ex Libris*, (wood-engraving), 1945

In complete contrast, wartime shortages of imported textiles and the return of designers Avis Higgs and May Smith led to a renewed interest in hand-printed textiles in New Zealand during the 1940s.¹⁷⁵ Higgs had been appointed senior designer at Silk & Textile Printers Ltd in Sydney in 1941 and began designing bold screen-prints which were influenced by her training under Hungarian Modernist Desiderius Orban.¹⁷⁶ The textiles Higgs designed were unusual in that she often incorporated city motifs into her work, some of which were reminiscent of her earlier linocuts of Wellington streets. On

¹⁷³ Barbara Blake, *Ex Libris, New Zealand Bookplates 1925-1950*, Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library & The National Library Gallery, 1992, p. 3.

¹⁷⁴ Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *75 Years of Bookplates, Auckland Ex Libris Society 1930-2005*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2005, p. 16.

¹⁷⁵ Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *Avis Higgs, joie de vivre*, Napier: Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, 2000, pp. 26-27.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

her return to Wellington in 1948 she exhibited futuristic and impressionistic style printed scarves at the opening of the Helen Hitchings Gallery.¹⁷⁷ She also created a series of abstract designs for printed textiles, such as *Maori Motif*, (Fig. 50), based on her studies of Māori artefacts in the Dominion Museum.¹⁷⁸ Finding little local support for her work, Higgs relocated to London in 1950 to continue her career.

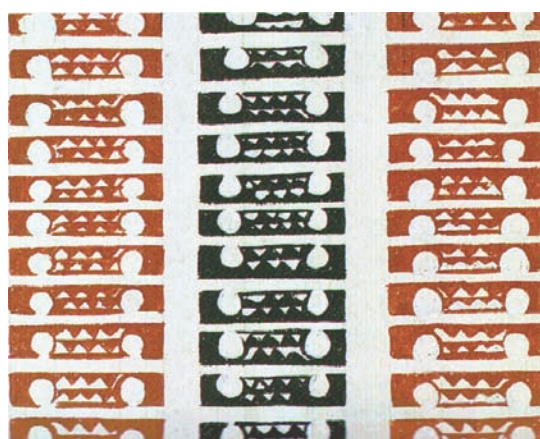


Fig. 50. Avis Higgs, *Maori Motif*, (acrylic), 1949

The collapse of the etching market had coincided with May Smith's graduation as an engraver from the Royal College of Art in 1931 and she found an alternative source of income by printing fabric with wooden and linoleum blocks. Smith enjoyed some success, selling printed fabrics to Heaton & Sons and Peter Jones of Sloane Square.¹⁷⁹ Her linoblock printed fabric was characterized by use of repeat patterns of highly-abstracted natural motifs, (Fig. 51), a style she introduced to New Zealand on her return from her studies in 1939. Smith was appointed education officer by the Auckland Society of Arts and gave regular lectures on the development of textile design and demonstrations of hand block printing in addition to lecturing on the history of art.¹⁸⁰ In 1945 Smith relocated to Gisborne and established a commercial fabric

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 27-31.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ In 1936 she was invited to join a London company, Contemporary Designs Ltd, which created designs for British manufacturers and in 1938 she became a member of the Society of Industrial Artists & Designers. May Smith Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS-Papers-1999.

¹⁸⁰ Ian Thwaites Ian & Rie Fletcher, *We Learnt To See. Elam's Rutland Group 1935-1958*, Auckland: Puriri Press, 2004, p. 207.

printing business.¹⁸¹ She also worked with architect Vernon Brown, creating textiles to furnish the interiors of the modern houses he designed, and responded to the mood of cultural nationalism by featuring indigenous motifs in her textiles.¹⁸²



Fig. 51. May Smith, *Printed Fabric* (linoblock), c.1934
Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki, purchased 1979



Fig. 52. May Smith & A.R.D. Fairburn, *Printed Fabric*, (woodcut & linoblock), 1947

Brown also encouraged A.R.D. Fairburn to consider a career as a fabric designer and examples of his printed textiles were included alongside those by Smith in the *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand* 1947, (Fig. 52).¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Auckland War Memorial Museum, *Patterns of Identity, Textiles in Aotearoa - May Smith*, www.textiles.org.nz/museum/msmith/

¹⁸² Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design*, Auckland: A Godwit book published by Random House, 2004, p. 103.

¹⁸³ Lauris Edmond, (ed.), *The Letters of A.R.D. Fairburn*, Auckland: Oxford University Press,

Printed textiles, like bookplates and book-illustrations, brought the work of printmakers to the attention of a much wider audience but were viewed very much as a craft rather than an art. It is only in recent years that design historians, such as Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, have paid serious academic attention to printed textiles as works of art in their own right.

4.5 Changes in Printmaking Training

Cultural nationalism and isolation had a profound impact on attitudes towards art education. The belief grew that only a New Zealand designed arts curriculum, taught by New Zealand teachers, would generate a national art. In a lecture broadcast on 3YA art critic Professor J.N. Findlay argued that no foreign artist, no matter how eminent, could familiarise New Zealand children with their own landscape, vegetation and people, and that this was a role New Zealand artists must undertake.¹⁸⁴ The New Zealand Society of Artists also began lobbying for the “more extensive employment of New Zealand artists as teachers in educational institutions”.¹⁸⁵ Art educationalist Gordon Tovey and C.E. Beeby, the Director General of Education, had been convinced since the New Education Fellowship Conference held in Wellington in 1937, that the only way to build an art of national identity was to replace the British South Kensington system of art training with a New Zealand designed curriculum. In 1944 Beeby invited Tovey to chair a committee of training college lecturers, consisting of J.D. Charlton Edgar, Roland Hipkins, B. Harris and J.A. Masterton, to update the existing art and crafts curriculum. The committee's report, *An Art Scheme For Primary Schools*, published in 1945, revolutionised art education in New Zealand by overturning the South Kensington model that had been the basis of art training in this country since the late nineteenth-century.¹⁸⁶ Better known as the New Art Scheme, this curriculum was similar to the one Tovey had tested out on Dunedin schoolchildren during the 1930s.

1981, p. 151.

¹⁸⁴ Professor J.N. Findlay, “Artists Cannot Afford To Be Slack”, *New Zealand Listener*, Vol 10, No 253, 28 April 1944, p. 19.

¹⁸⁵ Basil Honour, “The N.Z. Society of Artists”, *Art In New Zealand*, Vol 13, No 2, December 1940, p. 87.

¹⁸⁶ New Zealand Education Department, *An Art Scheme for Primary Schools*, Wellington:

Although aimed at primary school level, the New Art Scheme soon affected art training at secondary and tertiary levels. Personal expression replaced attempts to teach children a realist style.¹⁸⁷ Just how radically different the New Art Scheme was from the South Kensington system could be judged by Tovey's advice to teachers "Don't teach linear perspective",¹⁸⁸ and even more astonishing "There is often some difficulty in deciding just how much help should be given to a child at any stage... many would advocate that the teacher should avoid giving any help at all".¹⁸⁹ Beeby appointed Tovey as the country's first National Supervisor of Arts and Crafts in 1945, a position which allowed him to introduce the system on a nationwide basis. It was an educational revolution that could have launched an exciting new era in printmaking, but instead saw it enter a period of rapid decline. Although Tovey recruited printmaker Dick Seelye to help implement the Scheme, printmaking played little part in the new curriculum.¹⁹⁰ Despite Tovey's inclusive rhetoric, his objective was to change the nature of painting rather than fostering all media. Peter Smith, who was also involved in implementing the new curriculum, recalled that Tovey had serious doubts about including 'crafts' in the curriculum. However, he saw them as a means of breaking down resistance to his innovations; "Gordon thought teachers would accept his painting theory because of the confidence built up by the accomplishments of those fairly structured craft activities".¹⁹¹

At the same time, art schools and the art departments of technical schools were undergoing a major restructuring. That tertiary art education in New Zealand required an overhaul was indisputable, for although South Kensington teachers had been introducing students to the fine arts as well as providing them with vocational training

School Publications Branch, 1945, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ William Barrett, "An Investigation of the bases of the Education Department's art scheme (tentative) 1945", M. A. thesis, Canterbury University College, 1948, p. 103.

¹⁸⁸ G. Tovey, "Art in Primary Schools. Helping the Child", *Education*, Vol 2, No 4, September 1949, p. 41.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁹⁰ John Ewing, *Development of the New Zealand Primary School Curriculum 1877-1970*, Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1970, p. 201.

¹⁹¹ Peter Smith quoted in Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour, Gordon Tovey Artist Educator*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1998, p. 93.

since at least 1908, many students were still post-primary schoolchildren undertaking courses that would equip them for apprenticeships. In addition, the majority of art schools were classified by the Department of Education as technical schools rather than art schools.¹⁹² In 1946, the Canterbury College School of Art was reclassified as a senior school of art, admission was restricted to students aged sixteen years and over and most of its technical courses were removed from the curriculum.¹⁹³ In Auckland, A.R.D. Fairburn successfully campaigned for the Elam School of Art to align itself with the University of Auckland, and it began offering a Diploma course to university age students. Printmaking, which had been actively fostered at Elam under Arnold Goodwin, was completely marginalised. Fairburn insisted that a separate department be set up for such ‘applied arts’, to ensure that the fine arts did not “become swamped by industrial design and other commercial arts”.¹⁹⁴ Fairburn’s views gained added impetus when he was appointed lecturer in the History and Theory of Fine Arts at Elam in 1950. His attitude towards the print was demonstrated a year later when he proposed establishing a New Zealand Print Society, the sole objective of which was to be the reproduction of famous paintings for educational purposes.¹⁹⁵

Underlying this new professionalism was a rejection of the Arts and Crafts philosophy associated with the South Kensington system. Art schools were now intent on producing painters rather than artists who did not differentiate between the fine and applied arts. The situation was exacerbated by the retirement of a generation of South Kensington system teachers who had previously championed the print as a fine art, including Francis Shurrock and Richard Wallwork from the Canterbury School of Art, R.N. Field from the Dunedin School of Art, Arnold Goodwin from Elam and Harry Linley Richardson from Palmerston North Technical College. Printmaking was now offered only where a lecturer took a particular interest in the subject. For example, J.D.

¹⁹² A.R.D. Fairburn, “The Auckland School of Art”, *Art In New Zealand*, December-January, 1944-1945, p. 27.

¹⁹³ E. T. Beardsley, “The Politics of Provincialism”, N. C. Phillips, (ed.), *A History of the University of Canterbury, 1873-1973*, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1973, p. 230.

¹⁹⁴ A.R.D. Fairburn, “Arts and Crafts in the Schools, A View of Aesthetic Education”, *The Arts In New Zealand*, Vol 17, No 3, April-May 1945, p. 36.

¹⁹⁵ A.R.D. Fairburn, “An Appeal for a New Zealand Print Society”, *Arts Year Book No 7*, Wellington: Wingfield Press, 1951, p. 152.

Charlton Edgar, who was appointed Head of Art at the Auckland Training College in 1942, taught numerous future printmakers, including Stanley Palmer.¹⁹⁶ With few art schools offering printmaking, students found training elsewhere. Roland Hipkins, E. Mervyn Taylor, Harry Tombs and George Woods offered printmaking tuition at the Wellington Sketch & Studio Club,¹⁹⁷ while Hilda Wiseman, Arthur Hipwell, Adele Younghusband and Harry Vye Miller provided classes at their private studios.¹⁹⁸

4.6 Conclusion

A rather unexpected result of the war was that it led to a renewed interest in Japanese woodcuts among New Zealanders, particularly those who served in the occupation forces in Japan. Allan Swinton, who became Director of the John Leech Gallery in Auckland in 1948, recalls that after the war public demand for Japanese woodcuts was so great that he found it difficult to interest customers in New Zealand prints.¹⁹⁹ Among those who served in Japan was Sir Erima Northcroft, a member of the War Crimes Tribunal, who returned to Christchurch with a very extensive collection of colour woodcuts,²⁰⁰ and Keith Mosheim who brought a significant collection back to Auckland.²⁰¹ Mosheim was appointed Education Officer for the Auckland Society of Arts and gave regular lectures on Japanese woodcuts, and organised a touring exhibition of his print collection in 1949.²⁰² A resurgence in interest in Japanese prints was far from being the only reason for the declining popularity of New Zealand prints.

¹⁹⁶ Peter Entwisle, 'Edgar, James Douglas Charlton, 1903-1976'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 July 2005, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

¹⁹⁷ Wellington Sketch & Studio Club, *Syllabi, 1940s*. Alexander Turnbull Library.

¹⁹⁸ Miller offered classes for over forty years and among the many printmakers he taught were Grahame Sydney and Kathryn Madill.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Allan Swinton, 12 December 2004.

²⁰⁰ "Japanese Colour Prints Displayed", *The Star Sun*, Christchurch, 3 June 1954, np. William Baverstock Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury

²⁰¹ Mosheim also gave an address on 'Japanese Colour Prints to the Auckland Ex Libris Society, and later published a book on the subject. Ian Thwaites & Rie Fletcher, *75 Years of Bookplates*, *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

²⁰² "Japanese Woodblock Prints Exhibited in Tauranga. Outstanding Collection on Tour of

As previously discussed, there was a growing perception that professional artists should confine themselves to painting, an attitude reflected in everything from the exclusion of fine art printmaking from the new art curriculum to the disappearance of prints from regional art society exhibitions. The magnitude of this change in attitude towards the print can be gauged from the fact that during the 1940s only 647 prints were created by New Zealand artists, compared to 1,325 a decade earlier.²⁰³ In effect there was a reduction in printmaking activity of over 50% in a decade. One of the very few print exhibitions to be staged in the late 1940s was the travelling *Exhibition of Prints by New Zealand Artists* organised by the Community Arts Service in 1947. This included works by George Woods, E. Mervyn Taylor, Kenneth W. Hassall, Stewart MacLennan, Gilbert Meadows and James Boswell. Although critic Arthur Hipwell commented that their prints demonstrated “A high standard of craftsmanship, a wide range of techniques and a strong contemporary spirit”,²⁰⁴ it was evident that only a handful of artists were now practising printmaking, and they showed none of the enthusiasm for experimentation that had characterised printmaking of the 1930s. The root cause of this conservatism was not due to an over-emphasis on technique and a paucity of original ideas on behalf of the printmakers, but the reluctance of art societies and public galleries to accept modern prints for exhibition.

Evidence of this was provided by the organisers of the *Art in Otago Centennial Exhibition*, 1948, who found it necessary to position Frances Hodgkin’s avant-garde lithograph *Arrangement of Jugs*, (colour lithograph), 1938, (Plate 156), “at a little distance by itself (a tribute to its unusual power)”, and advised visitors that they would probably find her more traditional watercolour, *Her First Communion* more pleasing.²⁰⁵ It was a ridiculous over-reaction to a print created a decade earlier for the edification of

N.Z.”, *Bay of Plenty Times*, 17 June 1949, p. 30. National Art Gallery, Exhibition Files, MU000007, Te Papa Archives.

²⁰³ These statistics are based on the prints recorded in the print database, a summary of which can be found in the Print Survey included at the end of Volume Two.

²⁰⁴ Arthur Hipwell, “Fine Craftsmanship And Artistry Seen in Prints Exhibition”, *The Auckland Star*, 8 November 1947. Kenneth W. Hassall File, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery.

²⁰⁵ Harry Vye Miller, “Exhibition Reviewed: Hundred Years of Art In Otago”, *Evening Star*, 8 March 1948, p. 4. Special Collections, Dunedin Public Library.

British school-children. British printmaker John Piper had persuaded Hodgkins to create this abstract still life for the Contemporary Lithographs Programme, which he and Robert Motherwell had established to provide schools with inexpensive, contemporary art.²⁰⁶ Although Hodgkins created the print for schoolchildren, she made no concession to age, and the print had an aesthetic rigour few British modernists could match.²⁰⁷ The controversy which erupted in 1948 over the acquisition of Hodgkin's painting, *The Pleasure Garde*, for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery demonstrated the continuing conservatism of that city's art establishment.

William Baverstock, Honorary Curator of the McDougall Art Gallery, founding member of The Group and Secretary of the Canterbury Society of Arts, had long held an antipathy towards modern art. "The art world would seem to be as productive of outrages as the underworld and to vie with it in disrepute".²⁰⁸ Despite having worked as a commercial lithographer from 1910 to 1928 for his father who managed the Lithographic Department of the *Christchurch Press*, Baverstock "viewed prints with some disdain as being very much secondary works of art".²⁰⁹ His antipathy towards the print meant that he regularly refused offers of prints for the McDougall Art Gallery collection; most notoriously, he ensured that Rex Nan Kivell's gift of 301 modern British prints was not added to the collection when presented to the city in 1953.²¹⁰ Instead 34 of the prints were given to the public library for its picture loan collection, and the remaining works placed in storage in the Canterbury Museum.²¹¹

²⁰⁶ Among other artists who contributed to the scheme were Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, John Piper, Edward Wadsworth and Edward Ardizzone. Pat Gilmour, *Artists at Curwen*, London: Tate Gallery, 1977, p. 86.

²⁰⁷ Iain Buchanan has suggested that two watercolours that Hodgkins created in 1937, *Still Life* and *Arrangements of Jugs*, were studies for this lithograph. Iain Buchanan et al, *Frances Hodgkins Paintings and Drawings*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001, p. 150.

²⁰⁸ William Baverstock, "Creative Art", *The Timaru Herald*, 7 September 1946, np. William Baverstock Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury

²⁰⁹ Neil Roberts, introduction, Peter Vangioni, *Graphica Britannica, The Rex Nan Kivell Gift of British Modernist Prints*, Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery, 2005, p. 10.

²¹⁰ Neil Roberts, *ibid.*

²¹¹ It was not until 2005 that the Christchurch public had an opportunity to view the works when they were the focal point of the *Graphica Britannica Exhibition* held at the new Christchurch Art Gallery.

In comparison, Australian public galleries began appointing professional print curators of the calibre of Dr Ursula Hoff at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1943, Ron Appeyard at the Adelaide Art Gallery in 1948 and later Daniel Thomas at the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.²¹² They arranged exhibitions of prints by contemporary Australian artists and regularly purchased examples of their prints for public collections. Thomas Gulliver, New Zealand's first honorary curator of prints, had managed to establish the core of a national print collection and to introduce a comprehensive print exhibition and acquisition policy at Auckland City Art Gallery before his premature death in 1933. However, neither Stewart MacLennan nor Leo Bestall, the only other printmakers to hold positions as professional curators after Gulliver, used their positions to champion the print. The disparity in institutional support meant that while contemporary Australian printmakers stood a good chance of having their work acquired by a major gallery, New Zealand printmakers had little hope of gaining any such recognition. By 1950, the Auckland City Art Gallery remained the only public gallery with a substantial collection of twentieth-century New Zealand prints. Elsewhere print collections developed on an ad hoc basis, reflecting the personal tastes of donors rather than any coherent curatorial direction.

Although the Community Arts Service launched in 1947 arranged several travelling exhibitions of contemporary New Zealand prints,²¹³ exhibition opportunities for printmakers were becoming scarce. Prints were rarely included in art society exhibitions and alternative print galleries that had begun as a temporary wartime contingency, such as the Wellington Central Library newspaper reading room, became virtually the only other outlets for the print. No longer considered a fine art, printmaking slowly disappeared from the arts calendar, and by the end of the decade, prints were consigned to occasional craft exhibitions such as the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts' *Craft Exhibition and the Margaret Butler Bequest*, staged in 1950. This more than any other event, signalled that the ascendancy of the print was at an end.

²¹² Sasha Grishin, *Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History*, Roseville East, NSW., Craftsman House, 1994, pp. 18-21.

²¹³ J.F. McDougall, "Community Arts Service, The First Year of Work", Howard Wadman (ed.), *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand No. 3: 1947*, Wellington: Harry Tombs Ltd, 1947, p. 125.

CONCLUSION

The principal intention of this thesis has been to disprove claims by art historians such as Gordon Brown and Peter Tomory that little printmaking of any significance occurred in New Zealand prior to the print revival of the 1960s.¹ It should by now be clear that a vibrant school of New Zealand printmaking emerged and flourished between 1900 and 1950. Previous histories have grossly underestimated the artistic significance of early twentieth-century printmakers, and the numbers of artists who adopted the medium. My research has shown printmakers were among the first New Zealand artists to create regionalist imagery and to use their art to bring attention to political and environmental issues. Their experimentation with abstraction and surrealism also placed them among the earliest proponents of modernism in this country. Several New Zealand printmakers have been recognised by British and Australian print historians for their contributions to early twentieth-century art, but here in New Zealand they remain largely unknown. Sadly, even the few printmakers who did attain some recognition were criticised for their emphasis on craftsmanship, for working in the commercial art sector, for alleged cultural appropriation, for supposed deference to British printmaking and for participating in ‘non fine-art areas’ such as bookplate and textile design.

The research also indicated that there was no so-called golden thread of continuity in the development of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking, with each new generation of printmakers building on, or reacting against, the initiatives of their predecessors. Printmaking flourished only in areas and periods where curators, art teachers, critics and dealers supported it as a fine art, and enjoyed intermittent success where institutional support was lacking. So sporadic were its fortunes that the printmakers associated with the print revival of the 1960s were largely unaware of the existence of their early twentieth-century predecessors.

¹ Gordon Brown, “Introduction”, *The Print Council of New Zealand Exhibition 2*, Auckland: The Print Council of New Zealand, 1969, p. 4 & P.A. Tomory, “Art” in A. L. Mcleod (ed.), *The Pattern of New Zealand Culture*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press & Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, p. 197. Neither Brown nor Tomory have published anything in the last four decades to indicate that they have altered their views about early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking.

I believe that the core reason for the widespread institutional marginalisation of early twentieth-century printmakers could be attributed to the fact that their art practice presented an uncomfortable challenge to New Zealand art historians and curators more used to dealing with the concrete dichotomies of fine and commercial art, or fine art and craft. Unfortunately these modern historians and curators uncritically adopted Clive Bell and Roger Fry's formalist theories, resulting in early twentieth-century printmakers being virtually omitted from the art historical record. When assessing Roger Fry's contribution to art theory, Frances Spalding concluded "Inevitably the emphasis on form narrowed art's role. Fry had only limited interest in the work of art as an embodiment of history; and for the greater part of his life he undervalued its capacity to document and inform".² The same criticism could be levelled at his New Zealand acolytes. Typical was Francis Pound who, rather than noting the extraordinary innovations made by early twentieth-century printmakers, claimed the preoccupation of artists of this era with the creation of an art of national identity had been detrimental to New Zealand art and responsible for delaying the advent of modernist abstraction.³

Fry's and Bell's formalism was given renewed impetus in the late 1940s by American art critic Clement Greenberg and, remote though New Zealand art was from the controversy, it was not immune. Greenberg claimed that the centre of the art world no longer lay in France but had shifted to the United States where the individualism encouraged by American society had led to the flourishing of Abstract Expressionism,⁴ "one of the few manifestations of our time uninflated by illegitimate content – no religion or mysticism or political certainties".⁵ At a stroke, the major preoccupations of New Zealand printmakers, Social Realism, Surrealism and Neo-Romanticism, were discredited. During the ensuing Cold War years, Abstract Expressionism was presented as the art of Democracy, while populist,

² Frances Spalding, *British Art Since 1900*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1986, p. 63.

³ Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions, Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1999, p. 145.

⁴ Clement Greenberg, "The Decline of Cubism", *Partisan Review*, No 3, March 1948, p. 369.

⁵ Clement Greenberg, "Our Period Style", *Partisan Review*, No 11, November 1949, p. 1138.

nationalist art was condemned as the state-sponsored art of Communist Russia and other totalitarian regimes.⁶ As the United States Government sponsored exhibitions of Abstract Expressionist paintings at home and abroad, populist printmakers found themselves increasingly marginalised, and their work physically removed from the public arena.⁷

Once artists in this country began exploring abstraction, interest in regionalism waned to such an extent that they “denied any interest in painting with a specially New Zealand character”.⁸ It was to the United States rather than Europe that artists began looking for inspiration, with a profound and lasting effect for New Zealand art. For example, after visiting America in 1958 and viewing works by Jackson Pollock and other Abstract Expressionists, Colin McCahon’s art became increasingly abstract and large-scale.⁹ The model of artistic practice that became the norm was that of an Abstract Expressionist painter, a non-conformist working alone in pursuit of his personal vision. It was the antithesis of the co-operative approach favoured by early twentieth-century printmakers, who created small-scale regionalist prints, held craftsmanship in the highest regard and who were motivated by a sense of collective social responsibility. Painters who worked this populist, regionalist idiom, such as Peter McIntyre, also found their work marginalised by art historians keen to promote a New Zealand modernism which “emphasised formalism and subjectivity rather than... narrative and figurative concerns....”¹⁰

⁶ Frances Stoner Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War, The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, New York: The New Press, 1999, p. 268.

⁷ In 1953 the State Department instructed all United States Information Agencies in Europe to remove books illustrated by populist printmaker Rockwell Kent from their shelves. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁸ Gordon Brown & Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting, 1939-1980*, London, Auckland: Collins, 1982, p. 147.

⁹ Michael Dunn, *New Zealand Painting, A Concise History*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, pp. 114-115.

¹⁰ Warren Feeney, “National Identity and Peter McIntyre’s New Zealand”, *The Journal of New Zealand Art History*, Volume 25, 2004, p. 5.

It was not until painters with established reputations like Pat Hanly and Ralph Hotere began creating prints which met these formalist criteria during the 1960s, that printmaking was finally accepted as a fine art by members of the modern art establishment. For example, Gordon Brown, Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the Auckland City Art Gallery, was so supportive of these painter-printmakers he helped establish the Print Council of New Zealand in 1967, an organisation which acted as a catalyst for a revival of the print in New Zealand.¹¹ A common characteristic of painter-printmakers associated with the Print Council was that they had received their initial art training as school-children under Gordon Tovey's New Art Scheme, and several, including John Drawbridge, Stanley Palmer, Marilyn Webb, Cliff Whiting and Ralph Hotere, had worked under Tovey as art advisors, implementing his reforms in schools throughout the country. Most accepted Tovey's contention that conceptual art was superior to representational art and that concern for technique and craftsmanship impaired creative expression.¹² Typical was Pat Hanly who declared that technique was "a handrail for the unsure and nothing more".¹³

Indeed, art critics like Peter Cape who championed modern painter-printmakers, made a point of differentiating them from early twentieth-century printmakers by emphasising their commitment to spontaneous expression and lack of concern for technical excellence. This led to the perception that prints created by contemporary painter-printmakers were aesthetically superior to those by early twentieth-century craftsmen-printmakers. It also gave the false impression that these earlier printmakers had been amateur dabblers, rather than formally trained professional artists who demonstrated a long-term commitment to printmaking as a fine art.

¹¹ Anne Kirker, *Prints: A Coming of Age, The Print Council of New Zealand*, Auckland: Friends of the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1987, p. 6.

¹² An exception was John Drawbridge who, after studying at Atelier 17 in Paris, retained a high regard for craftsmanship. He also came to realise how narrow his art training in this country had been, wishing "New Zealand artists had adopted the total approach that was taken for granted in France, where "artists were artists, they were painters, printmakers, sculptors, they did it all". John Drawbridge quoted in Mark Stocker, "A Window Into John Drawbridge", *Art New Zealand*, No 103, Winter 2002, p. 76.

¹³ Peter Cape, *Prints and Printmakers in New Zealand*, Auckland: Collins, 1974, p. 93.

In such a cultural climate, early twentieth-century printmakers faded into obscurity, and curatorial indifference meant their prints were rarely acquired for public collections. For example, only twelve prints by early-twentieth century New Zealand artists were acquired for the Auckland City Art Gallery collection during Peter Tomory's entire nine-year tenure as Director (1956 to 1964).¹⁴ Revealingly, it was Tomory's intention "to build a significant and wide-ranging print collection, that would supplement the collection in the areas where the Gallery could not afford to buy paintings, and would act as an educational tool".¹⁵ It was a remarkably limited approach to the print compared to the one adopted by Australian, British and American print curators, who viewed the print as a fine artform in its own right, rather than as a cheap substitute for a painting. His approach was all the more surprising given that he was regarded as a print connoisseur of some repute.¹⁶

With public art galleries reluctant to collect, let alone exhibit, prints by early twentieth-century New Zealand artists, it was left to those outside the official art establishment to bring them to public attention. A key figure in this regard was Helen Hitchings who had established the earliest contemporary art dealer gallery in the country in 1949. Although her gallery was short-lived, Hitchings made a point of representing early twentieth-century printmakers, and continued promoting them well into the 1970s. In 1978 she organised an *Exhibition of Original Wood-Engravings, Woodcuts and Linocuts by 35 New Zealand Artists from the 1930s to 1978*. Held at the University Club, Wellington, this featured 170 prints by artists including Rona Dyer, George Woods, E. Mervyn Taylor, Stewart Maclellan, John L. Moore, Evelyn Page and Lois White. According to Hitchings "The occasion is unique as it is the first time such a collection has been put together. The work is sympathetic, being humanistic in expression rather than technological".¹⁷ Public

¹⁴ Of these, three were gifts, and the remaining nine prints were etchings by Trevor Lloyd. Auckland Art Gallery, <http://collection.aucklandartgallery.govt.nz>

¹⁵ Courtney Johnson, "A Connoisseur's Eye: Prints from the Tomory Collection", *NZArt Monthly*, March 2005, www.nzartmonthly.co.nz/courtneyjohnson

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ University Club Wellington, *Newsletter*, August 1978, p. 4. Helen Hitchings Papers, Series 4, CA120/9, 4/5, Te Papa Archives, NRAM X 33.

interest was so great that Hitchings extended the exhibition for another month by popular request.¹⁸ Members of the art establishment, however, remained unmoved.

Distinct parallels could be drawn between the continuing marginalisation of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmakers and that of women artists. Both were shunned because their art tended to be accessible and have narrative content, it was usually representational in execution, showed concern for social issues, and more often than not, was created in a medium which did not rank as highly as oil painting or sculpture in Vasari's hierarchy of media. It was not until feminist art historians such as Linda Nochlin began questioning the ideological framework on which modern art historians defined greatness,¹⁹ and their preoccupation with painting over all other media, that women artists began to receive critical recognition. For example, the emphasis Käthe Kollwitz placed on social themes and her representational, didactic style of printmaking had resulted in modernists minimising her significance as a German Expressionist, but during the 1980s the work of feminist historians resulted in Kollwitz receiving more considered critical assessment.²⁰ A similar phenomenon occurred in New Zealand in the 1990s, with feminist historians bringing the careers of women artists to attention, for example, Jillian Cassidy's "Canterbury Women Printmakers" (1993) and "Eileen Mayo The Dunedin Prints" (1999), and Linda Tyler's "Rona Dyer Muralist and Wood Engraver" (1999). Yet, while interest in early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking certainly increased substantially after the advent of feminist historiography, no wholesale re-evaluation of printmaking as a fine art followed.

If anything the status of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking deteriorated even further during the 1990s as the legacy of Gordon Tovey's educational reforms continued to cast a long shadow over curatorial practices and

¹⁸ Helen Hitchings, University Club File, *ibid*.

¹⁹ Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in *Women, Art and Power and other Essays*, New York: Harper & Row, 1988, p. 145.

²⁰ Alessandra Comini, "Gender or Genius? The Women Artists of German Expressionism" in N. Broude & M. Garrard (eds.), *Feminism and Art History*, New York: Harper & Row, 1982, p. 271.

art historical debate. Revered as a key figure in the emergence of contemporary New Zealand art and the contemporary Māori art movement in particular,²¹ Tovey's theories still had wide currency among art historians and curators. Like all revolutionaries Tovey had gained acceptance for his theories by attacking the credibility of the system he wished to replace. Tovey claimed that the South Kensington system had stifled experimentation by emphasising technical excellence at the expense of creativity. This overlooked the fact that some of the most experimental New Zealand art of the early twentieth-century had been created during the 1930s by printmakers trained under the South Kensington system, who regarded craftsmanship as the foundation of their art. Tovey also implied that the South Kensington system was almost entirely vocational in intent and had remained unaltered since its inception in the nineteenth-century, which was far from being the case. Kensington trained art teachers such as Harry Linley Richardson had been providing printmaking students with fine art training as well as vocational training since at least 1908, and the arrival of La Trobe teachers in the 1920s had resulted in much more emphasis being placed on the fine arts.

It is difficult not to conclude that Tovey's overthrow of the British South Kensington system in New Zealand was motivated as much by cultural nationalism as it was by a zeal for educational reform. He found it untenable that an art of national identity could be based on a British curriculum delivered by British art teachers. Tovey's theories attracted surprisingly little academic scrutiny, and his educational reforms only began to be more critically appraised in the late 1990s. For example, Peter Smith, who helped Tovey replace the South Kensington system with the New Art Scheme, noted that he failed to recognise that "expression and interpretation are complex processes and involve more than permission to be spontaneous and creative. Expression requires knowledge about feeling as well as sophisticated knowledge of intellectual, technical and formal skills".²² Had refugee printmakers and art historians been given sanctuary in New Zealand during World

²¹ Damian Skinner, "Finding the Family Resemblance, Gordon Tovey and the Tovey Generation", *Art New Zealand*, No 91, Winter 1999, p. 65.

²² Peter Smith, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: A Background Paper*, Wellington: New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, www.minedu.gov.nz

War Two, it is highly likely they would have challenged Tovey's rather narrow vision, which focussed on painting to the detriment of all other arts. In Australia, for instance, German art historian Ursula Hoff, who was appointed as a print curator at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1943,²³ went on to establish the Print Council of Australia,²⁴ and refugee artists and historians made a similar impact on the arts in Britain and the United States.

Also contributing to the marginalisation of early twentieth-century printmakers during the 1990s was the debate that arose concerning use of Māori imagery by Pakeha artists. This resulted in early twentieth-century printmakers being retrospectively accused of cultural appropriation by Leonard Bell and Francis Pound. Māori academic Ngahuia Te Awekotuku initiated the debate by condemning modern abstract artist Gordon Walters for 'exploiting' and 'colonising' the koru symbol.²⁵ In an effort to refute her claims, Pound attempted to justify Walter's use of Māori forms as "an appropriation which wished to empower an otherwise hidden or despised discourse...."²⁶ Both he and Bell contrasted Walter's modernity with the "primitivist picturesque" prints of E. Mervyn Taylor, which they inferred in some way debased Māori art.²⁷ While they went to great lengths to detail how Walters' art had been affected by his interest in Māori culture, no indication was given that Taylor's exposure to Māori art had led him to change how he engraved the woodblock.²⁸ Nor was any mention made of Taylor's sustained support of emerging Māori artists. For example, when Taylor was awarded a scholarship by the Association of New Zealand Art Societies in 1952, he travelled to Te Kaha on the

²³ Dagmar Eichberger, "Ursula Hoff: A Tribute", *Melbourne Art Journal*, No 3, 1999, p. 4.

²⁴ Ursula Hoff also assisted Dr Walter Auburn in establishing the Print Council of New Zealand, and opened its first exhibition in Auckland in September 1967. A. Kirker, *ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵ Nicholas Thomas, p. 144.

²⁶ Francis Pound, *The Space Between: Pakeha Use of Maori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*, Auckland: Workshop Press, 1994, p. 122.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁸ Douglas Horrell, "The Engaging Line: E. Mervyn Taylor's Prints On Maori Subjects", M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 2006, p. 29.

East Coast of the North Island to further his knowledge of Māori life.²⁹ He befriended Cliff Whiting who became his protégé and, through Taylor's encouragement, one of the first Māori artists to adopt printmaking.³⁰ Bell and Pound's arguments amounted to little more than an extension of their attacks on the representational, populist approach of early twentieth-century New Zealand artists.

Pound and Bell were succeeded by a generation of post-modernist art historians who overturned modernist theory by placing greater importance on examining the context in which works were created, and disregarding the artificial boundaries between fine and applied art. This led to the appearance of numerous monographs about individual printmakers, but surprisingly, not to a complete reassessment of the significance of early twentieth-century printmaking. Indeed, the majority of post-modern curators and art historians in this country continue to harbour considerable suspicion of early twentieth-century New Zealand prints. They hold little appeal to those who associate them with a period when New Zealand was still largely a monocultural, male-dominated country that had not quite disengaged itself from Mother England.³¹ This phenomenon was noted by writer Dennis McEldowney who observed that while he personally recalled these as being exciting and innovative years, contemporary academics and writers had a tendency to decry the inter-war era as "ideologically unsound."³² He remarked on their reluctance to accept "how much of the vitality and innovation was institutional and even government led"; and the tendency to dismiss as paternalistic the efforts of those who had tried to give the public a right to 'the best' in the arts.³³ In comparison, their Australian curatorial colleagues have shown no such reluctance and have been

²⁹ Tony Mackle, Interview with Mrs Teddy Henderson (formerly Mrs E. M. Taylor), Te Papa Archives, CD Rom MU466/17.

³⁰ Whiting spent the next two years living with the Taylor family in Wellington, sharing Taylor's studio, and studying to be an art advisor at the local teacher training college. Ibid.

³¹ Dennis McEldowney, "Ideologically Unsound", *Landfall, New Zealand Arts & Letters, The Fifties Issue*, No 185, April 1993, p. 11.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p. 12.

actively acquiring early twentieth-century New Zealand prints for Australian public collections and exhibiting and documenting the work of these New Zealand artists.

In this country, even the few curators supportive of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking find themselves constrained by the primacy of other art media, low budgets and lack of exhibition space. For example, the current survey exhibition of New Zealand art, *Toi Te Papa, Art of the Nation 1940-Today*, includes only five prints.³⁴ Zara Stanhope has suggested that the low profile of the print in New Zealand can largely be attributed to the lack of a national print collection.³⁵ It certainly has resulted in there being no foundation for the appreciation of the work of early twentieth-century printmakers, whose work is rarely exhibited. A lack of print curators has been another perennial problem, with galleries working to such strict budgets that curators tend to be generalists rather than specialists. Lack of institutional support means that printmaking now occupies a lower position in the New Zealand artworld than it did a century ago. If prints were ranked in third place in the hierarchy of media behind painting and sculpture in 1900, they now occupy sixth place, languishing also behind installations, textiles and photography.

Sadly indicative of the low status of the print in New Zealand art is the fact that even contemporary printmakers do not appreciate that they are part of a well-established printmaking tradition. Discussions with printmakers Barry Cleavin, Ted Dutch, Kees Hos, Cathryn Shine, Campbell Smith and Marilyn Webb during the course of this research revealed that while some could recall prints by Trevor Lloyd, A. J. Rae and E. Mervyn Taylor, few were aware of the existence of any other early twentieth-century New Zealand printmakers or were familiar with their prints. Similarly, the majority of tertiary-level art history students canvassed during this research were knowledgeable about European, British, Australian and Japanese

³⁴ The exhibition has two stages, the first, *Toi Te Papa, Art Of The Nation 1940-Today*, contains five early twentieth-century prints. Stage two, *From the Cave to the Temple* will contain five examples of mid twentieth-century prints. The exhibition will be in place for 5 years and 8 more changes of prints are planned over this period. Correspondence with Victoria Robson, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 11 July 2005.

³⁵ Zara Stanhope, "Low Profile", Paper presented at the Fourth Australian Print Symposium, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2001, www.australianprints.gov.au

printmaking, but unaware that New Zealand also has a robust printmaking tradition. This gap in our art historical knowledge has allowed Gordon Brown's and Peter Tomory's claims about the scarcity and impoverished nature of early twentieth-century New Zealand printmaking to continue unchallenged, and contemporary researchers remain unaware of fifty years of the country's visual heritage.³⁶

Early twentieth-century New Zealand prints will remain a largely unseen heritage until such time as art historians and curators realise that an over-emphasis on painting has distorted the history of New Zealand art by diminishing the role played by artists working in other media.

³⁶ For example, Tracey White describes Marilyn Webb as a pioneer printmaker, when she did not begin her printmaking career until the late 1950s. Tracey White, "'Mixtures of being a Mixture': Multiple Identities in the Art of Marilyn Webb", M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 2002, p. 33.

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